

BELLEVILLE LODGE,

A NOVEL,

IN TWO VOLUMES.

Let perjur'd slaves dull verse to flatt'ry fit,
And pow'r reward the prostituted wit;
The gen'rous bosom dares with scorn behold
Corruption's baseness tho' enshrin'd with gold:
Who, steel'd to ill, the cause of right defends,
Is snatch'd at once to gild corruption's ends.

VOL. II.

D U B L I N:

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FOR MESSRS. P. WOGAN, P. BYRNE, J. MOORE,
W. JONES, AND J. RICE.

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BELLEVILLE LODGE.

LETTER I.

Lady Harriet to Mrs. Grenville.

ALL your friends at Belleville are extremely sorry they cannot have the pleasure of your company at this joyous period, but as you have been so obliging to fix the day, it is some consolation to know we are to have that felicity, though not so soon as we could wish.

The friendly trio, as you call us, are now all disposed of, but we have done wrong, we should have remained inflexible a much longer time if it was only to have shewn our despotism and our swains constancy, or have done something to have afforded a little chat amongst the polite circles, had a few duels fought, a few heads brought to their kindred clod by a pistol shot, instead of which, publish it not in Gath, tell it not in the streets of the Metropolis, Lady Harriet Bently, Lady Maria Armstrong,

Aumstrong, and Miss Aubrey, without any fuss, are wives.

Poor foolish women, not content to reign sole sovereigns, must voluntarily enter into slavery ! Hitherto I must confess the yoke has been light, but how long it will continue so is in the womb of fate ; to tell you truly, I have such an opinion of the man I have chosen and my own disposition, that I could say to eternity.

Young days, Harriet, I hear you answer, every one is too apt to think well of themselves, and of their choice, every one listens to the flattering hope that tells them their happiness will be permanent—but how often are they deceived.

True, my good friend, hear me, there are a set of mortals that never think of a future day, but will marry the first that offers, others solely for riches, whilst some are caught by exteriors, without asking whether there are any mental accomplishments ; or, fascinated by politeness, good nature, and attention they see a man possess in company, without enquiring what his character is at home : Can you wonder then there are so many unhappy males and females, for one sex is just as much to blame as the other.

We,

We, the trio, have not done matters so hastily, therefore look forward with satisfaction. Maria and Frances would both have wrote, but they say they must be such egotists that they desired me to be their secretary, as talking of myself must now be certainly over, in this they are mistaken you find.

So much for what has been done, now for what is to be—the whole party have promised to reside at Belleville Lodge whilst they stay in the country, the time we are in town the Duke's mansion is to receive us, and as soon as Lord Henry's is finished we pass some months with them, by that time Colonel Bowen's house will be compleated, and then we are all to settle in our respective homes, but as it is but a walk from each other, it can scarcely be called a separation.

We have returned our visits, I assure you there are many agreeable families in this neighbourhood. To-morrow we set out, a large party, to reconnoitre the country, every day we propose going different roads, that when you come amongst us we may know how to chuse the good and refuse the evil.

There are an infinite variety, we are informed, of very pleasant rides and extensive prospects, some of which have
been

been never thoroughly explored. The people here are too lazy to encounter difficulties—we are resolved not to let one thing escape us, therefore do not wonder to see a book filled with our adventures.

I am of such consequence that I have been called three times since I began this epistle.

Your's ever,

HARRIET ARMSTRONG.

LETTER II.

Lady Harriet to Mrs. Grenville.

MY dear Mrs. Grenville will receive quite a packet by this post. I have confined Maria and Frances to thanks for your congratulations, description of their cloaths, presents of jewels from their swains, &c. all interesting matters I keep to myself, thinking I have a right, being the first that proposed viewing the country.

As

As I foretold we have met with an adventure, which without farther prefacing I will proceed to relate.

We had rode about ten miles when we observed on our right an eminence, which we ascended, looking round we saw the ruins of an old castle embosomed in a wood, that appeared to us impenetrable. The high turrets which more than half had bowed to time, shewed the grandeur of its former structure. We imagined we saw a smoke arise from behind one of the battlements, this made us willing to go farther, that we might have a more perfect view, and now discovered a shepherd's cot situated on one side of this noble edifice; a stupendous fall of water opposite added to the landscape, the noise it made in its fall with the cawing of the rooks, gave a solemnity to the whole.

We stood thoughtful, a kind of pleasing melancholy, if I may be allowed the expression, played round the heart, and forced a wish to view so fine a piece of antiquity nearer.

We gave our horses to the servants, resolving to penetrate the wood, which we found we must do if we meant to examine the structure; a winding path presented itself, and we discovered footsteps and followed their tract, but judge
our

our surprize, when about the midway at the foot of a large oak lay sleeping one of the most elegant females I ever saw—her head rested on a lamb, who like his mistress, Morpheus had shed his poppies over; she wore a kind of coarse stuff which shepherd's girls are usually clad in, but extremely clean and neat.

Harcourt stood by her enamoured, I caught him by the arm and repeated,

In a thick wood, whose deep embow'ring shade,
Seem'd most for love and contemplation made,
Harcourt, a swain, who never thought of love,
At once was struck, nor had the power to move.

And can you wonder, Lady Harriet, (said he) if it should be so, when you behold such an angelic creature? Were it not for her dress I should turn heathen, and worship her as a goddess.

I confessed I never saw a more perfect figure or a more pleasing face, and had it not been for her complexion I should have pronounced her the greatest beauty my eyes ever beheld.

I drew them behind the trees to consult what was to be done, whether we should awake her or not; whilst we were debating she arose, looked at the sun, and by her hurry seemed to think she had outstaid her time—her lamb followed her.

We

We all exclaimed, how much like Sterne's Maria! If we were struck with her in a sleeping position, how much more when we saw her walk—we might very justly have repeated those lines of Milton,

Grace was in all her steps, heav'n in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love.

We followed her at a distance, but had not gone far before she looked round with such an apparent surprise as if we were the first people she had ever seen, she remained riveted to the spot 'till we came to her, and though her dress bespoke her of mean extraction, yet there was such a gentility about her, so much above the common run of mortals, that made their obeisance first—she courtesied gracefully without speaking a word.

The Duke begged pardon for intruding on her retirement, but the sight of the castle and the romantic scene around had struck us so much, that we could not resist the propensity we had to have a nearer view, little thinking to meet with a person in that sequestered place whose appearance bespoke her so capable of satisfying our curiosity.

In regard to the old building before us, (she said) appearances often deceived, as it had now, for she knew of no tradition,

tion, nor had heard any name but what they had given it, which was the Castle in the Wood.

We asked her whether she resided in the part that appeared habitable?

She answered no, her home was in the cottage where she was born, she had lost both her father and mother very early in life, and now resided with her grandfather and grandmother.

And have you never been from this spot?

Never farther (she replied) than the neighbouring village, and that but very seldom.

We then asked, how it was possible, in so retired a place, she had acquired so much the manners of the polite world?

She said, she was obliged to her god-mother for the little knowledge she possessed, and every perfection they had flattered her with.

The old shepherd came while we were talking, and in his uncooth manner corroborated what she had spoke, and added, tho'f his daughter could talk so well, and knew all about the great folks, yet it rested in her head only, her heart was not a bit the worse, for she did every thing they wished her, and was as content with a dry crust and a potatoe, as gentlefolks were with their roast meat; for his part, he

he never was desirous of her knowing so much, for fear it should make her think little of her home and relations, but here he was mainly mistaken, for she now entertained them with her learning, and made he and his dame almost as wise as herself, for 'till she told them about their Kings and Queens, they were foolish enough to think that St. George who slayed the great Dragon, and Tom Thumb the giant killer, was the two that reigned now.

We could not help smiling at the simplicity of this talkative old man—Lord Henry made him a present, which with many a nod of the head and scrape of the foot he put in his pocket.

Maria asked the daughter if she had no desire of seeing the world. She said indeed she had not, she had heard it painted in so despicable a light, that she shuddered whenever she thought there might be a possibility of her being forced from her native home, her friends were old, and death may present a different scene.

The tears shone in her mild eyes, we would not let her dwell on the subject, but asked her company to view the castle.

The old shepherd desired we would not attempt it, for in the only part that any body could live was an old man

and his wife, who had two large mastiff dogs for a guard, to keep people from viewing their habitation, and they were so very fierce that they would tear us to pieces in a moment.

We thanked him for this intelligence, wished them a good day, and walked to the top of the hill, where we mounted our horses.

The way home we could talk of nothing but the charming nymph of the wood, and have resolved once more to see her before we quit this part of the world, if any thing material transpires in regard to this lovely creature, I will acquaint you with it.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith desire to be particularly remembered.

Adieu, believe me ever,

Your's,

HARRIET ARMSTRONG.

LETTER

LETTER III.

Lady Maria to Mrs. Grenville.

HARRIET and I have had quite an altercation which should write, I tell her I am resolved to have some share in relating the history of our wood nymph, she has at last permitted me, as our late adventure is rather in the dolorous stile, a stile she is not very fond of, the next we hope will be otherwise, and then she will resume the pen.

Mr. Harcourt is become quite the passionate lover, talking eternally of her perfections; fate seems to have looked him out a help-mate unexpectedly, her family and every objection we can start sinks to nothing against his powerful arguments, his only fear is that he has not perfections sufficient to engage her affection.

Fears, Lady Harriet tells him, which all lovers feel, for it is only to him they appear so, for to us disinterested people

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there

there are none; this gives him spirits, and fixes his resolutions.

His persuasions have got the better of our determination, which was to have seen every part of the country before we paid the old castle another visit, but his lover-like haste would admit of no delay, therefore to oblige him we promised the day following to take an early breakfast and go the route before described.

We did so, and in the same wood saw the lovely maid, but how different was her countenance—the tears were streaming from her fine eyes, and her faithful companion's fleece was wet with those harbingers of sorrow.

When we came she arose with a melancholy air, and said, you see me, ladies and gentlemen, a very different person than when I had last the pleasure of meeting you here, I have since lost my godmother—last night the clay cold earth received her dear remains.

We said every thing we could to console her, she thanked us for our civility in trying to alleviate her sorrows, but at present (she said) her grief would not admit of consolation, for in her she had lost a mother, a friend, and an instructor, my life will now be a void, this place, once so dear, without her company

pany has become a solitary wilderness—I have now no friend to consult, and, but my two old parents, no one to converse with.

We asked, if she had lived with her that she spoke of missing her so much. She said, not in the cottage, her home was in the castle, which we might now see if we pleased, for the man, his wife and mastiffs, were fled, they had only resided there to keep her good Mrs. Buckley a prisoner, her death had enlarged them from this cruel office, she supposed they were gone to acquaint those who had directed them to detain such a worthy woman, which they had for more than eighteen years in so lonely a place, without once seeing or conversing with any person but her and her parents, and that was estimated a favor.

As we had once expressed a desire of viewing it, she would if it was agreeable be our conductor. We expressed our approbation and accompanied her.

On entering the gates she shewed us the grave of her friend, the tears followed her words, we were compelled to hurry her on, otherwise she would have sunk on the spot, so much was she affected.

The front part was an entire ruin, large massy stones, cornices, statues, laid

laid scattered all around, some of the turrets that remained were so much bent that they threatened every instant to crush to death those that were so hardy to explore the inner part; however curiosity got the better of danger, and we passed 'till we came to that which had been inhabited, a flight of stone stairs green with damp and loosened by age.

She ascended, we followed, and found three rooms that had gone through some repairs; on one side was a kitchen, the others were two bed chambers, the outer one the man and his wife occupied, the inner the lady—It had once been hung with tapestry, but this had also suffered by time, for there was no colour left, and almost all in tatters—the rooms were large and lofty, but the windows so high from the floor and the glass so cracked, the dim light that entered not only gave it the appearance of a prison, but filled the mind with horror.

We expressed our astonishment that a person who it was evident must have seen and known so much of the world, should have lived such a number of years in this dreary shocking castle without trying to escape from it. We asked, if she had ever heard her mention her family, as she was so beloved and so constantly with her,

her, it was natural to think to her she would be communicative.

She said no, she never but once spoke of herself, or her former life, and that was on her asking the reason of her being so strictly confined—she replied, seek not, my dear Isabella, to know the cause, a solemn oath prevents me from satisfying your curiosity, my case is hard, but since Providence has been so kind to give me you as a companion, I will remain here without a wish to escape, death will soon set me free, my enemies then will be satisfied. This was all I ever heard from her, for as I saw it gave her pain I never renewed the subject.

There was a great number of very fine drawings of this lady's pinned round the room, and also of Isabella's.

We paid a visit to her little cottage, found the inside perfectly clean and neat, her grandmother a chatty old woman, but very different from our nymph of the wood, nothing above the common cottagers.

We begged her company at Belleville Lodge, she thanked us for our obliging invitation, but desired at the present to be excused, for the recent death of her friend had rendered her incapable of enjoying any pleasure; when time had a little obliterated her sorrow, she should be

be happy to accept our civility, for she confessed this loss would make her native home appear very different :—Yet, how could she leave her good old parents ?

We replied, though they were old yet they looked healthy, and just now a change of scene might be of service, our stay in the country would not be longer than two months, and that time we should be happy to have her with us. We all pressed her to comply with our request, and asked permission of her parents to take her, told them the bad consequence of letting her indulge her grief, that at last they consented to our entreaties, and persuaded her to accept the invitation.

After some hesitation she answered, your kind persuasions, ladies and gentlemen, have conquered my objections, and as my friends are not unwilling to part from me, I will attend you in about a fortnight, the intermediate time I dedicate to the memory of my dear Mrs. Buckley, and in imploring heaven to grant me sufficient philosophy to support myself under this great affliction. We then agreed to fetch her the following week.

Harcourt is all rapture and spirits to think of her being in the same house with him, says, he never knew how to prize

prize the bounty heaven had so freely bestowed on him 'till the knowledge he had it in his power to make so deserving a woman happy, by sharing it with her.

Adieu, ever your's,

MARIA BENTLY.

LETTER IV.

Lady Harriet to Mrs. Grenville.

MY DEAR MRS. GRENVILLE,

I HAVE now the pleasure of acquainting you, the charming Isabella is at Belleville, we thought her exquisitely handsome in her coarse dress, but it is impossible to form an idea the alteration this has made—I assure you we met her with astonishment—she has not only the appearance but the ease of a woman of the first fashion: Her address is insinuating, her manner captivating, one would really think she had studied the graces

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from

from an infant, her attitudes are so fine. Mrs. Buckley must have taken infinite pains to form her mind as well as person, for neither appear to have one blemish.

I dare say you are much surprised at my writing you of her being dressed as we were when we saw her, but she soon cleared up the mystery, by telling us her cloaths were given her by her godmother, for since that dear Lady had been in the castle she had worn nothing but black, she said, it suited best the gloomy disposition of her mind and her imprisoned state—she sometimes (when the surly old man and his wife were out of the way) made her put on her cloaths she supposed to see if they fitted, which they did exactly, as they were near the same height and shape, but she always observed at those times the tears were ready to start from her eyes.

She once said to her, why, my dear Madam, will you desire me to dress, when it apparently causes you pain? She replied, there are times, my dear Isabella, when pleasure will shew itself in a feeling mind, by those expressions of sorrow, as much as if the heart was depressed by grief—Sometimes I find a satisfaction in seeing you thus, at other times I cannot bear it, you are so much like a friend of mine, that you bring to
my

my recollection events that add a double poignancy to my sorrows—Besides I feel myself hurt when I reflect that I am deprived of the means that would authorise you always to appear so, how much soever I wish it, and it is only within these walls I can ever suffer you to wear them, for every one ought to dress according to the station Providence has marked out for them, chance may one day or other lead strangers this way, and your situation in life forbids your being seen in any but your rustic dress. I hope, ladies I have not now erred by putting it on, for I thought in your company I could not appear in my own, but I will assuredly take it off as soon as I return to my humble habitation.

She then begged pardon for detaining us so long, but every word that dear Lady spoke was so imprinted on her memory, and she took such a pleasure in repeating her sentiments, that she was afraid she had now done it at the expence of good manners. We desired she would make no apology, for we had listened to her with pleasure, as it shewed both her friendship and her gratitude.

You desire a minute description of her, I will attempt it though my pen is scarcely adequate to the task.

She

She is not quite so tall as myself, yet very near it, her face is finely shaped, rather of the oval, dark blue eyes, shaded with such long silken fringes that they may be mistaken for black, expressive, mild and penetrating at the same time, her mouth small, her lips red, and teeth remarkably white and even, her nose Grecian, her eyebrows arched and dark, her forehead low but exactly suiting to the make of her face, her arms and indeed her whole person finely shaped, but her complexion is almost as brown as a West Indian, she has a very remarkable mole on her temple.

This is her picture, but unless you saw the original you cannot be a judge of the tout ensemble. We are teaching her music, and dancing, she has a very good voice, and has learned several little airs already—Harcourt is very attentive to her, and she seems pleased with his assiduities, I think in time they will add to our list.

To-morrow we go to see the Duke of Preston's seat, they tell us it is one of the most superb in the kingdom, about ten miles from Belleville, I am not good at description therefore shall give up my pen to Maria.

I must tell you, when we went to carry Isabella to see her parents, Harcourt

court insisted on their accepting thirty pounds a year from him, they made many words, the grandmother especially, said, if it was for the sake of her child's goodness she was not deserving of it, for it was Mrs. Buckley had made her what she was.

He then related what he had done for our villagers, that we had left no room for him to do any thing there, and he was ashamed to have so good a fortune without having it in his power to make others happy as well as himself, that if they had been no relation to the lovely Isabella, yet their years and character would have been sufficient to make him wish to serve them. They seemed convinced and received his offer with gratitude. He gave them the first year's pay immediately, which he had put in his pocket for that purpose.

The old man now no longer encounters the bleak winds on the mountains, but has left his shepherd's occupation, and turned his thoughts on keeping poultry, hogs, &c. which they mean to sell, we have stocked their little yard, and they have hired a girl from the next village to help them; it will make it more comfortable to our dear wood nymph when she returns to her friends. We have expressed a wish always to keep her,

her, but she has declined it whilst her friends live, but if we will be so obliging as to permit her, every summer she will be our visitor.

You know not how happy this has made the old couple, and their daughter in consequence of it, Harcourt finds it by all her expressions, how highly pleased she is with his generosity, and were it not that it looked like a bribe so soon to make her an offer, he would have done it ere this.

He brought, unknown to her, her favorite lamb in his phaeton; he runs after his mistress like a dog. Though so trifling a matter, yet you know not how it has added to her satisfaction, and raised her swain in her opinion.

Was it not very good, Lady Harriet, (she says to me ten times in a day) to think of my little Selima? What a benevolent heart, my dear Mrs. Bowen, has this brother of yours, how very happy he has made us all? She sees me writing, desires to be remembered to my friend, and hopes one day or other she shall have the honour of being added to the number—I have promised for you.

Adieu, my dear Mrs. Grenville, believe me ever

Your's,

HARRIET ARMSTRONG.

LETTER V.

Lady Maria to Mrs. Grenville.

DEAR MRS. GRENVILLE,

WE have seen the Duke of Preston's superb mansion, indeed it is so in every sense of the word—the furniture is magnificent, the family pictures are all there, and appear to be well executed, the gardens very extensive, and laid out in great taste, but at present much neglected.

This was mostly the late Duke's residence, the housekeeper tells us, the situation does not please the present, that he has never been in it since his brother and sister's death—his Grace's son comes often there, but he has no taste in gardening, which is the reason of its running to ruin.

We were going above stairs when I looked round to speak to Isabella, wishing to hear her remarks, found she was not in the company, Harcourt missed her at the same time, and went back to search

search for her; he found her on a sofa in tears, on his expressing his astonishment at finding her in that situation, she told him it was occasioned by looking at that portrait over the chimney, it was so much like what her beloved Mrs. Buckley must have been when young, that she could not look at it without recalling to her mind that dear friend; she attempted following them, but had not power to move.

Harcourt ran to the housekeeper and begged a glass of water seeing her look so pale, when she brought it she expressed her sorrow at the lady's looking so ill, supposed it was owing to her walking round the gardens.

She said it was not fatigue, and very innocently gave the cause, and begged to know who that picture was designed for.

The housekeeper told her it was the late Duchess, and the gentleman that held her hand the Duke; that they were thought the handsomest couple in England. She was very inquisitive to know who the lady was that so much resembled her late mistress.

Isabella knew no disguise, but in her artless manner said, in what part of the world she had been so many years confined, her name, how long she had been dead,

dead, and how very fond she was of her.

Harcourt left her talking and came to tell us where he had found her and the reason she gave for absenting herself, this brought us back to the parlour.

As we entered she exclaimed, Oh, ladies, you have often wished you could have seen my dear godmother, that portrait before us will give you an exact idea of her person, but the beauties of her mind can never be portrayed.

We then asked questions in turn of the housekeeper, she said, his Grace died soon after that was drawn, and the Duchess was so affected at his loss, that she did not long survive.

We asked if she had a sister?

She answered no, for she was the only child of the Duke of Rhodons, an immense great fortune she brought with her into the family, and at the death of her parents much more; this estate was hers, and such an one came by her.

She talked on in this kind of manner 'till we were all quite tired of listening to things we had no concern with, took out our watches, said it was time to think of returning, this stopped her volubility, but our sweet wood-nymph could be hardly drawn from the spot.

When we came home we all observed the great likeness of Isabella to the Duke,

Duke, the particular mole in the temple, which the housekeeper told us all that family had, the complexion only varied, for the Duke was very fair.

One day on our observing the mole Mrs. Buckley told her always to hide it, for it was an ugly mark, she did not like to see it, made her wear a large cap that no one might discover it.

We often spoke of this in her absence, that there must be a particular reason for her wishing to conceal this mark, for it was far from being ugly, on the contrary, it added a beauty to her face—this and the resemblance to her godmother, the Duchess of Preston, and Isabella's to the Duke—indeed there was in her a look of both, we could not help thinking there was some hidden mystery that at present was to us inexplicable.

About a week after this as we were walking in the garden, her lamb had strayed into the adjacent field, and was got almost on the brow of the hill, she called it but it did not run to her as usual, she was afraid it was lame and would go herself to see—she accordingly went, and instantly we heard her scream, and saw two men take hold of her.

The gentlemen were all gone to look at Lord Henry's house, that was building, we flew to the hill, but by this time they

they had put her in a chaise and were almost out of sight.

We immediately ordered the men servants, some to follow their tract, and others to go and acquaint the gentlemen with this transaction.

Harcourt was almost distracted at the account, and ordered his horses instantly, we asked him which way he intended going, he said to the Duke of Preston's seat, for he really believed she was carried there, the woman was so very inquisitive and examined Isabella so narrowly that he could not think any of the neighbourhood would be guilty of such baseness.

This affair has ruffled our little society, for we all had a sincere regard for her.

Our servants are returned, no news of the dear girl, I hope her lover will be more successful, if not, I shall give her up as lost. You shall hear from us the first intelligence, for I make no doubt you are anxious for our nymph of the wood. To-morrow we go to acquaint her parents of this melancholy event, a task not at all calculated for the spirits of

Your

MARIA BENTLY.

Her

Her lamb, when we came to it, we found tied to a stick, therefore this must be done as a decoy to draw her to the top of the hill, and we must have had spies about us who had observed her great fondness for this animal.

LETTER VI.

Lady Maria to Mrs. Grenville.

DEAR MADAM,

WE are all of the same opinion, with you in regard to Isabella's being carried off, that it was entirely owing to the conversation she had with the housekeeper, it certainly raised doubts and fears in some guilty breast.

We rode to her parents the day after I sent my last, the husband was just gone to market to sell his poultry, the old woman came to meet us, quite overjoyed to tell how well they went on and how happy we had made them, that her dear
child

child would now enjoy herself when she came home, but where is she, ladies? What, have you hid her on purpose to frighten me, I suppose? We told her, we had not indeed, for she was not in our company.

After we had prepared her mind for something disagreeable, we related the whole matter—she wiped the falling tears which flowed very plentifully on this information, and to our great surprise thus began.

I am glad my husband is not at home, for I will now tell you what I have hitherto kept a secret even from him, Isabella is no relation of mine, tho' I love her as well as if she was my own flesh and blood.

We all exclaimed, not related, then whose child is she?

Mrs. Buckley's.

Proceed;

Eighteen years ago my daughter and son in law lived with us, in our little cottage, one day a man came and viewed yon castle, and said he should like to live there.

I answered it was more than I should, for it looked all the world like a haunted place, and I dared to say some of the ghosts of the great folks that owned it formerly did walk there now if the truth was known.

He

He said, if it were so it would not trouble him, for he was not afraid of the dead.

God forgive me, but I thought he was a wicked man for saying so.

He told me the great water fall yonder pleased him, and the great tall trees with the rooks noising in a morning was what he was very fond of, he certainly would come there if any of the rooms could be fitted up.

I replied I should be glad of a neighbour, for it was a sad lonesome place, not a soul to speak to from Christmas to Midsummer, and from Midsummer to Christmas again.

He liked it the better for that, he answered, so away my old man and he went to view it.

As to the front, it was all down, as you see, but by the time they had mended the windows, and put grates into the chimneys, the back part did not look amiss—but for all this I could never come from thence by night without looking behind, for the life of me, I was so afraid.

Well, the next week he sent chairs and beds and all other necessaries to the next town, where he was so cunning to buy a cart, and drove it himself that nobody might know where it come to.

In

In about a month after in the dead of the night a lady was brought and put into the inner room, and he and his wife, followed by two huge dogs, came with her.

The next day he called to found me, says he, Dame, I have brought a lady that is now and then out of her mind, her friends were not willing to put her into a madhouse, which made me chuse this retired place for them to put her in—she is big with child, and as soon as she is delivered if she gets better she is to go home again; that he had the dogs on purpose to keep curious folks from coming near them.

He then asked me where I could tell him of a midwife.

I told him yes, sure, I was one, that I had brought many a child into this wicked world.

He said then I should bring another if I pleased, and that I might call of the lady and tell her I was the person bespoke to deliver her.

I accordingly went, and in all my born days I never saw so pretty a woman, she had hands as white as a curd, she was crying when I came in, and so she continued a whole month after, 'till I was almost as vexed as she to see her in such a dismal condition.

Says

Says I to her one day, Madam, do you want for any thing you be always crying fo, I'll do all I can to serve you, if you will but tell me.

She thanked me very good naturedly.

Have you victuals enough?

She replied, yes, she did not want.

Then may be 'tis not dressed to your liking?

She had no complaints to make of that sort, but looking seriously at me, may I trust you, my good woman, will you promise not to divulge what I am going to tell you—I told her I would take my oath that moment if she pleased.

You see, Mrs. Humphrys, I am near my time, I have great reason to believe from my former usage and my present confinement, that the child will not long survive its birth, without you can think of some method to save its life by deceiving the man and his wife that lives here—these were her very words.

Lord, (said I) Madam, what can I do against such cross sharp folks as they two be, they be watching me so, as if I was going to steal whenever I come to see you; besides I have not a head for contrivance, but if you'll put me in a way, there's nothing but I will do to serve you.

You

You have a daughter, go and consult with her, but first make her promise to be silent.

Well, away I went, and when our men was gone to look after their sheep, we talked the matter over.

Now you must know, ladies, my child's reckoning was out at the same time Madam's was—Now, says she, mother, suppose I should lay in on the same day as Mrs. Buckley, I have great reason to think my infant is dead ever since I was so frightened by them nasty dogs, if you could but carry my dead child to her, and take away her live one, I would keep it with all my heart sooner than such a little innocent should be murdered, we had no occasion to tell Thomas but what it was his own. If I didn't kiss her for having such a thought, and away I went to the castle full of what we had agreed upon.

I shall never forget her the longest day I have to live, for she fell down upon her knees directly to thank God for putting it in our heads, and prayed so heartily for the success of this undertaking, I never saw a parson in his pulpit so much in earnest in my life, nor half so devout.

Thus we went on for a month longer, when one day our man was gone to the

next parish upon business, my child fell into labour, and sure enough it was dead—I wrapped it up in a handkerchief against the time Madam would call, which I expected every moment, as the man told me she had been bad all day.

In about three hours afterwards he came in a violent hurry for me to go to the lady, said she was all alone, for his wife was gone to buy proper provision for her, little thinking she would be wanted so soon.

I ran instantly with my bundle pinned to my side, and found her sure enough very bad—He staid in the outer room whilst I delivered her and put the dead child by her, and wrapped up the live one in a sheet, put it in a basket with some dirty linen upon the top, and hurried home with the sweet little baby. As I passed him it was God's mercy it did not cry—I said he might go and see the lady, but we had been very unfortunate, for the child was dead, I would just step to my daughter with the things I had in my basket to wash, and returned again instantly, for I would not let him know she was brought to bed for fear he might suspect something.

I had but just time to give the infant to my child before her husband and mine came home, and to his dying day he

he never knew but it was his own, no more does my good old man.

In about three days after I went to the castle and told them we had been more lucky than them, for we had a fine daughter born, but it did always happen so to poor folks, for their children did never die as the rich did—they thought it all gospel, for they were too busy in writing of letters and burying the baby to trouble their heads about us.

When I went to see her I found her very tolerable, she squeezed me by the hand to thank me, and begged before them she might have my little granddaughter now and then to suck her.

I said, yes sure, Madam, that you shall, and so I carried it over every day; and thus we went on 'till she was half a year old, when she grow'd very fair; the lady said she would be so much like her father she was afraid the cheat would be discovered, and she be made the most miserable of women; asked if I knew any thing that would brown the skin, as that would be the best disguise she could think of.

I said, I heard the gypsies used the juice of walnuts, which I could soon procure, for we had a great many of the trees in our wood. I accordingly made some, and we washed her face, neck and

arms, with it, and she was presently as brown as ourselves, and for that great mole on the side of her eye she made her wear a large cap that it might not be seen, and as soon as the colour began to wear off she washed herself again, and she still continues it by Mrs. Buckley's desire, but her own natural skin is as white as the driven snow.

We then asked her if she had heard the name of the lady's family.

She said never, but once she mentioned that she had been basely torn from her home by a set of ruffians as she was walking a little beyond a terrace walk belonging to her seat in the country—she believed their first intentions were to have murdered her, but one of them, who appeared their head, for they were all masked, on being asked what they were to do with her, said, if she would consent to take a solemn oath never to disclose the name of her family, nor ever try to escape, he had prepared a place for her, her life should be spared, and she should never want for necessaries.

For the sake of her unborn infant she did as they desired, and was then brought to this lonely place, that they had been so far as good as their word, and had also sent the worst of her cloaths, but the child's life was what they fought after,

after, for she guessed who were the people that had used her so cruelly, for if her daughter lived she must inherit large estates, besides a great deal of money, which, if it died, would fall to her husband's nephew.

This was all I could learn, she begged to stand godmother to the child, they agreed to it, and the woman stood for her that the parson might not see her.

When the child grew up, she taught her to read, write, work, and draw, that she was almost as clever as herself.

Just before she died she called me to her, my dear Humphrys, (she said) I find I shall not live long; still be a mother to my dear girl, and let her never know how near I am to her, it will only add to her sorrow, and cannot be the least service to her, for if ever she is known, she will have powerful enemies to encounter with—take all the money I have by me for your own use, I sincerely wish it was more; preserve this gold box, and if you think there may be a time when it would be right to disclose what you know, tell it, but not before that happens, and at the same time say, an oath prevented me from declaring the name, but in this box are the miniatures of Isabella's father and mother, taken from a large picture now in the family—this, ladies, I hid under a
stone

stone in our cottage, as she desired, and now I think the hour is come that it should be known, as it may be of service to my dear child.

The old shepherd's coming in put a stop to any further conversation, we took the box and parted, with assuring her we would not give her up 'till we had searched every place that was the least likely she should be secreted—that Mr. Harcourt was gone for that purpose. Humphrys cried when she told him of it, and said, he wished she had never gone from him.

When we returned we were eager to open the box, in which we found the exact copy of that large picture we had seen in the Duke of Preston's seat.

We had now no doubt but she was the daughter of the late Duke, and that they had a suspicion she was so from what the housekeeper had reported; this made us fear for her life, as they had used her mother so cruelly on her account, what lengths would they not go now she herself was in their power—this thought has greatly added to our uneasiness, and made us more impatient for Harcourt's return—if he brings any good tidings I shall be glad to impart the joyful news, which that he
may

may is most sincerely wished by, dear
Mrs. Grenville,

Your affectionate,

MARIA BENTLY.

LETTER VII.

*Isabella Humphrys to Lady Harriet
Armstrong.*

DEAR LADY HARRIET,

MY spirits have been and still are so agitated ever since I was so cruelly taken from my good friends, that I find it difficult to collect them sufficiently to write; it would be a satisfaction did I know you would ever receive it, but, alas! my situation makes me fear deception in every thing, my hopes are fled, all before me appears dreary, and I am afraid every passing moment what the next may produce.

But

But I will detain my dear friends no longer with a description of what I now feel, but proceed to relate my sad story.

I was hurried into a chaise the instant I came to the top of the hill by two men who placed themselves each side of me; they had pistols in their hands, which they threatened if I again screamed their contents should be lodged in my brains.

I believe those harsh expressions and my fears together made me faint, for I must have gone a considerable way before I recovered. When I came to myself, I thought I would try to conceal it, in hopes from their conversation I might learn why I had been so treated, and what they intended doing with me.

One of them soon after looked at me, and swore he thought he saw me move, but he was afraid he was mistaken, though he did not much care so long as he had the money, for live or dead he would carry me to him.

If the latter, (says the other) we may spare ourselves that trouble, for it is no use to bring a corpse to him, the dead can answer no questions.

Nor tell no secrets, (replied the first) and I hear he is afraid she has discovered some of his and the great man's, but mum for that—'tis no business to you or me, 'tis plain he wanted to talk with her first, because

because I told him, if it was her death he wished I would give her a blow that should send her off in a hurry.

And could you in conscience murder such a pretty creature in cold blood? answered the second.

And could you in conscience, (replied the other with a sneer) be accessory in stealing such a pretty creature from her friends, and frightening her to death, is not one as bad as the other? If she dies, 'tis all one, whether she was stunned by a blow, had her throat cut, or went off in a fright? Besides, should I be to blame, 'tis them that orders the deed that has the sin to answer for, not me.

Money (he replied) often makes us do what our hearts must condemn.

But don't we follow the examples of our betters, he answered) for they'll lie through thick and thin, deceive, betray, perjure themselves, all for the sake of this said chink. I wish old Bond had her safe in his house notwithstanding, for I dare say there are scouts enough abroad in search of her.

By this time we arrived at a cottage, where they took me out and soon discovered I was living; they called to the woman to bring me some refreshment, for it would be some time before I should have the offer of eating again.

I was a little easier in my mind, as I was now satisfied, by their discourse, they must have mistaken me for some other, for it was not possible I could know any matters they were acquainted with, therefore did not refuse a crust of bread and a glass of wine that was brought me.

In less than a quarter of an hour a chaise came to the door, I was ordered to go in it, my two companions also took their seats; they drove on very rapidly all that night, the next morning we stopped where they breakfasted, which I was made hastily to swallow.

We continued our journey 'till evening, when, with an oath, they said we were come to the end of our travels, and heartily glad they were to get rid of so sulky a companion, but they dared say, I should be made find my tongue. I could not help crying at their unfeeling treatment.

A kind of upper servant received me at the door, I asked her to what part of the world they had brought me, she told me she must answer no questions. I found it useless to interrogate her, and sat down with a heart almost bursting, though I still flattered myself I should soon be enlarged when I was seen by the person who had taken so much pains to get me.

I went

I went to bed soon after I came in, as she told me I could not see her master 'till the next day. In the night I heard such a number of carriages, and the watchmen announce every hour, that I imagined by the description Mrs. Buckley gave me of London I must be there—the house I was in appeared small but neatly furnished.

After I had breakfasted, I was told Mr. Bond and his son were waiting in the parlour to speak with me. My trembling limbs could scarce support me to them, and when I came in, the morose look of the father was not calculated to inspire me with more fortitude.

Come hither, girl, I desire you would tell me your name, who your parents were, and in what part of the world you were born?

To all which I answered without the least reserve.

And pray, who are you indebted to for your education? For I see by your manner there has been pains taken by somebody, or else you have told me a lie in regard to your friends.

I said I was obliged to a Mrs. Buckley, who was confined a prisoner in a castle, just by where I lived, she had lost her own child, and therefore begged to have me
with

with her to pass the time, and when I was old enough to learn, she taught me to read, write, work, and draw.

Draw too, Oh ho, quite a dangerous person, I suppose we shall be taken off in caricature, when you get among your relations again. Pray how long was it after her child died you was born?

I really am not certain, but I fancy about a week or a fortnight.

And who was this Mrs. Buckley, and what was the reason of her being confined?

I told him I never heard either, for she said, a solemn oath prevented her from declaring it.

And did she never forfeit it? Take care how you answer this, for if I detect you in a falsehood you are a prisoner for life.

I will assure you, Sir, by all that is sacred, she never did.

He then spoke in French to his son, (you know, Madam, I understand that language, though I speak it but imperfectly) The girl appears to have told the truth, nor can I see the likeness that foolish old woman would have me believe; as to having her shape and address is a meer nothing, how many are formed alike, and by being much with a person you naturally catch their manner—the complexion

complexion is sufficient to declare her not her child, for the families on both sides were remarkably fair.

The young man I observed never took his eyes from me the whole time, nor ever spoke 'till now. He said, indeed, Sir, I think you may dismiss her, for I am as well satisfied as you she is the identical person she declares herself to be, the shepherd's daughter.—He then turned to me, said he was sorry he had taken so much trouble, that I was welcome to depart to my own country as soon as I chose, he would give me five guineas to pay my expences home, which I was afraid to refuse, therefore courtified and accepted it, and I think I never felt myself happier in my life than at that moment—he rang the bell, the same woman came, he told her to give me a dinner, and then to see me take coach—she desired me to follow her which I did very joyfully.

The time now came that I was to go, a footman entered, said, he was ordered to attend me a part of the way. I took my leave of the housekeeper with a cheerful countenance, and thought every moment ten 'till I was seated in the carriage.

We travelled all night, the next morning I was called at four o'clock, and in
the

the evening entered a large place which the servant said was Salisbury. He then called a coach and drove to a house where I still am.

On my asking the reason we did not prosecute our journey, I was told I should soon be acquainted with it, but at present I must submit to confinement.

I asked what I had been guilty of to be so treated, I cried, and tried expostulations and persuasions, but neither would prevail, only he assured me, I should be used well.

A girl now made her appearance, she said she was sent to wait on me and desired I would order my supper. I said I would go to bed, for I had no appetite for any thing. She shewed me into a neat room, and after I had fastened the door I threw myself on the bed with my cloaths on, for I was afraid to undress me.

I arose as soon as it was light, unrefreshed, for uneasiness had banished sleep. I attempted opening the door, but found it was bolted on the outside. I now cried as if my heart was bursting.

When the maid came to tell me breakfast was ready she saw me in tears, said, I had more reason to laugh than cry, for that young Mr. Bond was violently in love with me, and it was he that

that ordered his servant to bring me to this place instead of carrying me home.

I told her I was very sorry I had been so unfortunate to inspire a passion in so cruel a heart, that had done every thing he could to make the object of it miserable.

She replied, that was not her master's intention, for he had too great a regard to wish to vex me. If it would make me easier to acquaint my friends where I was, she would venture to put a letter into the post office for me.

I thanked her for her kindness a thousand times, and instantly sat down to write, though much I fear she deceives me—for is she not a creature of his? But should this be so fortunate to reach you, shall I beg the favor of your woman to pack my cloaths, and direct it for Mr. Bond, to be left at the White Hart, Salisbury, she tell me I shall receive it with this address.

Oh, Lady Harriet, I shall never see my Belleville friends again, nor my dear old parents, ever will they debar me from your sight. I hope the generous Mr. Harcourt will continue his bounty, I know he will, and I find a consolation in the greatest of my distress to think they are provided for. I beg you will be so kind to remember the unhappy
Isabella

Isabella to all her good friends, and believe her to be with the greatest respect and esteem, dear Lady Harriet, sincerely and affectionately your's,

I. HUMPHRYS.

LETTER VIII.

To Thomas Goodbin, Esq.

IN love over head and ears as usual, Tom. New exploits, new schemes, have taken possession of the head and heart of thy friend. Surely I was born under an enterprising planet, for as soon as I get rid of one adventure another offers.

Who think you is at present my favorite Sultana? Nothing more or less than a shepherd's daughter, brought up in the deserts of Arabia for aught I know; by her own confession she never saw the god-like face of man excepting two old phizzes of her grandfather and another such an antediluvian, 'till within two months, so that she is one that will not set

set my wits much at work to subdue; I dare say, when I begin my flattering battery she will think me the finest fellow of the age.

My father sent, or at least dragged her from her friends, to ask a few odd questions concerning some queer stories he had been told, which I could see no head or tail to, nor did I trouble myself to enquire.

I was with him when the shepherd's daughter was announced, and thought I should get a laugh from her awkwardness, fright and dialect, otherwise I would have been off, for I detest such judge like doings.

But, guess my surprise, when I saw one of the most elegant females I ever beheld enter; for my part, I was so much struck that I never the least attended to their questions and answers, my head was all the time full of schemes to get her into my power, 'till my father said, I really believe her to be the person she declares herself. I replied certainly, and that he had better dismiss her.

After she was gone I asked very carelessly about her, as if I did not mind whether I was told or not.

He said, she was born of mean parents, and had been a recluse from her infancy.

This was a character quite new, and
made

made me the more eager to have such an extraordinary person in my seraglio.

I have not yet called on her, but have given the girl that is with her her documents, she is to persuade her to write to her friends, I mean to open it and their answers, then substitute others that will suit my plan.

The servant is just come with her epistle, upon my word quite pathetic, but I shall e'en let it go, for she has told them she is at Salisbury, and calls me Mr. Bond, therefore they will never find her out by the place, nor your humble servant by the name.

I got my trusty fellow to go with her in the coach the first stage, and the next morning to return with her the way they came, and to make her believe they were proceeding on their journey, all which he managed very cleverly. When they arrived in London, I had a house to receive her that I borrowed of Lord Binkham, one that had been often used for the same occasion, and a servant ready to attend her; she expects me this evening, I will not close this letter 'till I have visited this captivating shepherdess—Fitzgerald desires to be of the party, I have promised him a sight of her.

Adieu, I am going on the wings of love, booted and spurred, as if I came a great way.

Well,

Well, I have been, and repeated the same lover's cant that never used to fail, without having the least effect on her. Her heart is as impenetrable as adamant, for notwithstanding I told her my love was so great that if she was cruel my sword should soon end my existence, hear her answer to this dreadful declaration—

Love was a subject she should not listen to whilst she was a prisoner, her own inquietudes and distress were sufficient to absorb every thought, and guard every avenue of her heart from that passion, even if she credited my words, would I give her liberty and plead my regard in the midst of her friends, I should have a much greater chance of succeeding.

In vain did I talk, all my rhetoric signified nothing.

I now lodge in the same house that she may the more narrowly be watched, indeed I am satisfied she cannot escape were it not for this precaution, for her door is bolted on the outside every night, and her window is in the back part of the house nailed very securely.

Fitzgerald has seen her, and declares himself almost as much in love as your humble servant. I protest this is the first time I ever experienced that passion, though

though I have taken some pains to make the girls believe otherwise—her box is arrived which I shall take the liberty of searching.

I have opened the letters, and much fear from the contents I have a rival, one Harcourt, who, they write is still in search of her—this has furnished me with a hint.

Two of the first females in the world, Lady Maria Bently and Lady Harriet Armstrong are her friends, they picked her up on a common I hear, seeing what every one must, something so very attractive in her. Their letters were full of condolence, virtue, prudence—begged her to beware of a sham marriage, and invectives against the person who had dared to use her so. A deal of good advice to very little purpose, for I will take care she shall not be benefited by it.

I inclose you the copy I wrote for her perusal, which will suit me much better.

“The joy we all received, my dear Isabella, on opening your epistle can better be felt than described, what added to our satisfaction was to find you beloved by so deserving a man as Mr. Bond, we know him perfectly well, and know him to be a man of the nicest honour, I wish his father was like him,
but

but he is mercenary and morose, which makes the son, I suppose, afraid to tell him of his attachment to you, and is also the reason of your confinement, for if the old man gets the least intelligence he would instantly tear you from him; if you could get him to promise he would marry you after his death, he will I am assured punctually perform it, you will then be a happy woman, and we shall all sincerely rejoice at your good fortune.

Harcourt is near commencing a Benedict, he met with a very agreeable Lady at a ball given by the neighbouring gentlemen, and shortly after made her an offer which has been accepted, they are to be married this day month, we then all set off for France, and from thence shall make the tour of Italy—we intend being absent three years.

So far for our joyous doings—now, my Isabella, exert your fortitude, I am truly sorry to be the messenger of ill news to you, yet I think it right you should be acquainted with it.

We went to see your father and mother, but how exceedingly were we shocked to find her dead, and he expiring—they had caught the small-pox at the village, and this dreadful disorder swept them both away, we gave orders
to

to have them decently interred, and have sold their stock and reserved the money for you, which we will send to your order.

Adieu, my dear girl, the Duke, Lady Maria, Mrs. Bowen, &c. desire to be remembered to you.

Ever your's,

HARRIET ARMSTRONG.

Don't you think this will do: She has no parents left nor friends to go to. I have killed the first, and sent the others to the continent, and hearing what a charming character I have she cannot refuse being mine on my own terms. There is a closet in the room adjoining to her's, where I intend to secrete myself when she receives her box and opens this letter, I shall then be a judge of her real sentiments concerning this Harcourt—tell me what you think of my proceedings, and at the same time believe me

Ever your's,

FREDERICK.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

*Isabella Humphrys to Lady Harriet
Armstrong.*

TO receive a letter from my dear Lady Harriet gave me the greatest happiness it is possible to experience whilst in this wretched situation, I could scarcely open it for joy—Is it really so, (I said) will they permit me to hear from my friends, then I am not quite so wretched as I thought myself, but when I opened and read the contents—My God! to describe what I then felt is far beyond my pen. My poor good old parents!—And can I never more behold them? Perhaps my hard destiny added sorrow to their dying moments, and they prayed for their Isabella with their latest breath.

What then am I? A poor, friendless orphan, dead to all my friends, debarred of liberty, and compelled to hear the hated, the detested love of a libertine, lost to every principle of honour.

Forgive me, Lady Harriet, if my sentiments in regard to this man, do not at all coincide with yours—not knowing the
world

world may perhaps make me see things in a different light from those who are conversant with it, but if he has had the good fortune to be thought well of by you, I know your heart too well not to be assured he must have imposed on you, and carried a very opposite behaviour to the world from what he does in private life—I can speak it by cruel experience, for I have now been a fortnight confined, every night of which he and his companion, a Mr. Barton, have been so intoxicated that they keep my spirits in a continual alarm with their horrid oaths, noise, and intemperance, they force me to dine with them, but as soon as it is over, I hurry to my room and lock myself in, and there remain 'till next morning, with scarcely any sleep, for fear of the lock being forced.

It was but last night they both swore they would break open the door if I did not open it, and actually began putting their threats in execution, when a violent rap at the street door caused them to desist, and I heard a servant tell them Lord Binkham and his brother were come to spend the evening, they went to receive them I suppose, for every thing was quiet and continued so that night. I returned thanks to God for this interposition in my favor, and from that moment

ment I felt my spirits revive, and hope, long lost, once more presented itself.

I wish Mr. Harcourt as happy as he deserves, and then he must be compleatly so, for never was a better heart nor a better disposition. How happy must that woman be who has such a friend, such a companion, such a protector to pass through life with!

The gleam of sunshine is dispersed, my spirits are again sunk, I cannot proceed.—Another morning is arrived, day and night passes away, yet no change in my cruel fate, but every day seems marked for greater woes.

Last night I overheard the girl that is in the house tell her master, that I was busy writing, and she made no doubt but I would give it her to carry to the post office, as the other went safely, but that she should mind his injunctions of delivering it to him first. I am now quite disheartened, for it was a satisfaction that you would be acquainted with my distresses.

He has just been here, and again pleaded the sincerity of his regard—I stopped short by begging him to desist, I was sick of listening to such gross falsehoods, for his actions were incompatible with love, or at least my notions of it; wherever I had a regard I delighted

to shew it by acts of kindness, and studying to promote the happiness of the person I esteemed; he, on the contrary, tired me with a repetition of fulsome flattery, and instead of trying to make me contented, he studied every means to render me miserable; whatever he might promise himself from time, that it might reconcile me to those hardships, he was mistaken, my heart was not to be softened by compulsion.

He looked now quite angry, said, he would no longer trifle with a woman that was solely in his power, and this I might depend on, it should be the last of my reign—I had hitherto complained without reason, but in future I should have real cause—with this he flung out of the room.

What shall I do? If heaven do not assist me I am lost, undone.

By this time I suppose all my dear friends are safely landed on the continent, therefore they cannot at present hear what befalls their Isabella, yet it is a gratification to write every transaction, chance may one day or other present my thoughts, and then you will be convinced that no alteration in my situation could ever make me forget, or render you less dear.

The dreaded night came, I locked my door as usual, soon after I had dined the maid I heard bolt it—when I left the room he said, I will be as good as my word.

I went with a heart depressed and almost bursting with grief, he and his friend drank very freely at dinner that I imagined before the evening they would be ripe for every mischief.

About eleven o'clock I heard their voices near, I prayed heartily to God to assist me. They had unbarred the door and were trying the lock when they quarrelled who should enter first—Barton declared he had as great a right as the other, for he loved me full as well.

High words now arose, and such imprecations from both as made me tremble—at last I heard the clashing of swords, and presently the voice of Bond calling out, he was wounded, he was run through the sword arm—the servants ran up and dragged him to his room, the maid said, go this instant for a surgeon or they will both bleed to death.

I now recollected they had unbolted my door, and never had fastened it again, therefore thought, whilst they were all in a bustle, I might steal away.

I bundled up my linen and papers in a handkerchief, and unlocked it as

softly as I could; with fear and dread I passed the chamber where they were all assembled, and safely got to the bottom of the stairs, the street door open, (I suppose in their hurry to get a surgeon they forgot to fasten it) I ran as fast as my trembling limbs would permit, and when I was out of breath walked slowly, for I was afraid to stop; indeed where could I go? I had no home to receive me, nor knew I where to apply for a night's lodging.

After I had turned two or three corners I saw a church, and found myself so fatigued that I got to the door and there leaned, it gave way—I started at first, but had at last courage to peep in, at the farther end I saw a light. I walked in without making the least noise to the other side, I soon discovered they were men taking up a dead body.

As they went on with it one of them said the surgeon would be glad to meet with such a corpse as this.

Ah! little thought his friends, (said the other) when he was interred this evening, that he would ever pass this way again.

They now went off with their prize, and locked the door upon me, the moon shone bright and I walked up the aisle to see where I could find a seat proper to rest in,

in, I opened one that had cushions, and soon made up a bed with them, and after returning God thanks for directing me to so good an asylum, lay down and had the most refreshing sleep I had experienced since I left Belleville, for I knew myself secure from Bond, or at least for one night, and not having for almost three weeks scarcely any rest, I was quite exhausted.

When I awoke in the morning, which was not 'till ten o'clock, the transaction of the preceding day occurred, and it was some time before I could persuade myself I had my liberty, indeed I was still a prisoner, but I had lost my fears.

I arose, replaced the cushions, and searched for a place, that I might not be observed when any one came in.

I had not long been seated before the door was unlocked, and the bell tolled for prayers; I remained the service that I might join in thanksgiving to my Maker, for this his last goodness. So many attended that when I stood up I was not at all noticed either whilst I was there, or at my going out.

A coachman I suppose had observed my staring about, asked me if I wanted a coach?

I enquired to what place he was going.

He

He answered, his stand was by St. Paul's.

How far is that?

Sure (he said) I could not have been long in London not to know where St. Paul's church stood?

I asked him no more questions for fear of discovering myself, but thought as one church had befriended me, another might be equally as fortunate, therefore stepped into the coach, and told him to drive me there; however I had the comfort to think I should be still farther from the place of my confinement.

Whilst I was going I recollected he called the place London that I had all this time been made believe was Salisbury; how I received your letter appears now a mystery.

Thus was I reasoning with myself, my ideas quite absorbed, when the coachman coming to open the door roused me from my reverie; I paid his demand, and once more became a wanderer.

I kept on walking 'till I was almost tired to death, compelled by hunger I went to a shop, where I saw in the window jellies, pyes, and cakes, I asked for the latter, I suppose my eating it so greedily attracted the notice of the man that served me, for I saw he looked very

very earnestly. I took a second, but now as I eat, the tears flowed so fast, my heart was bursting, and I was almost choaked with grief; I put down the cake, for I found it impossible to swallow another bit.

With the most compassionate voice and a look of the greatest benignity, he said, are you not well, Madam? is it in my power to assist you?

It vibrated in my ears, it was the voice of an angel. I hastily exclaimed, and have I at last found pity? Articulation failed, I was totally silent, my head turned giddy, my eyes dim, I sunk breathless on the floor.

He ran for his wife, told her there was a lady wanted her assistance, instantly she came, rubbed my temples with Sal Volatile 'till I recovered, then very civilly led me into an inner room, and begged to know where she should send to my friends.

I thanked them for their great kindness, said, I should always look upon myself much indebted for their care and attention, wished I could avail myself of her last kind offer, but, alas! I was friendless and a stranger to this part of the world; how much she would add to the favors I had already received if she would be so good to recommend me to decent lodgings.

She

She replied, though my person had struck her the moment she saw me, and she found her heart interested in my sorrows, yet, if she was not thought too inquisitive, she should be glad to know something of my history, and if my life answered her present thoughts of me, there was not any thing but she would do to serve me; but begged I would excuse her acting 'till she had this information, for there were so many wicked unhappy females in the Metropolis, that she was afraid to trust any one from appearance only.

I said she was very right, no one could be too circumspect: I then gave a minute detail of my life to the present time; I also told her I had fifteen guineas in my pocket, then the Duke of Langton made me a present of whilst I was at Belleville, and five old Mr. Bond gave me to pay my coach hire into the country, besides some silver I had before in my pocket, and the watch Lady Maria had presented me with.

She thanked me for the trouble I had given myself in recounting the past transactions of my life, and said, before my money was exhausted she hoped to find some easy place for me, to wait on a lady, and 'till she could meet with one that she thought would suit I should board with her.

I was

I was so overjoyed at this offer that I knew not how to express the sense I had of it, I said, I should ever look on her and her husband as my preservers.

I then told her of the wash my godmother had given me to tawny my face, that I always carried it about me, I would now wash it off, and it would then be impossible I should be known by that detested man.

She advised me to do it instantly for fear as their's was a public shop I should be discovered.

I did so, and after two or three times I became quite another person, my brown complexion was changed to a remarkably fair one; indeed I hardly knew myself the metamorphose was so great.

I was not afraid of going out, I also changed my name, to Louisa Joyeux. I now did what I could to make myself serviceable to the family, taught their children to read and write, and helped them in their pastry, that they had a real affection for me, and were it not for their large family, would, I am persuaded, give me my board.

I shall still continue my scrawl and relate every occurrence as it happens 'till I have the pleasure of seeing my dear Belleville friends again, for since my beloved godmother, they claim every

thought and attention of dear Lady Harriet's affectionate,

ISABELLA.

IN CONTINUATION.

I have been a month at my good friend the pastry cook's, when one day she came with a very cheerful countenance, observing at the same time how melancholy I looked.

I cannot be otherwise, my good Mrs. Ruffel, when I find my little store decreasing, what will become of me when it is gone?

Do not be uneasy, (says this kind woman) heaven never forsakes the virtuous, you have been of so much service to my little folks in their learning that whilst I can give them bread you shall partake of it—But it will appear perhaps odd to make such a declaration before what I am going to tell you, but be assured if what I have heard for you does not entirely meet your approbation, only say so, and the same home that has been your's this past month shall continue so without your paying one farthing, my husband and I were determined to make
you

you the offer this very evening, the month being now expired.

I thanked her heartily for her goodness, and then begged I might know what she had to communicate.

She informed me she was at her mantua maker's, and she told her Lady Yeatman had asked them if they could recommend a young woman that had been genteelly educated, liked reading, and was a proper person to accompany her in her visits—she had promised to make enquiries. I instantly told them of you, and gave the character I am sure you justly deserve—next week they will see the Lady, and have promised to mention you to her; this made me come home so cheerful as I was in hopes it would give you pleasure—but think not from this, my dear Miss Joyeux, that I am desirous of your going, indeed I am not, for greatly shall I miss you, but as it may be for your advantage I banish all selfish considerations.

I said, by the account I imagined it would exactly suit me, but 'till I had seen and conversed with the Lady it was impossible to form a judgment.

About a fortnight after this a very elegant chariot drove to the door, a Lady came and asked if Miss Joyeux was at home, she had been informed she lodged there?

Mrs.

Mrs. Ruffel answered in the affirmative, and immediately ushered her into the room where I and some of their acquaintance were sitting. Her countenance was so placid, and her manner so extremely pleasing, that though I think it wrong to form a judgment hastily, yet I could not help determining in my mind, if she approved of me, I should not hesitate to fix myself with her.

She curtsied very gracefully to all around, then came to me and said, I believe, Madam, I do not err when I address you as Miss Joyeux, your appearance corresponds so well with the character given me.

I told her, I was infinitely obliged to my friends, and particularly so now, if any thing they had said contributed to favour me with her notice.

She supposed I had been informed she wanted a companion, that would read to her, go an airing, make tea when she had company, and visit wherever she went; if my education answered this, and it was agreeable to myself, she would call for me in about a fortnight, I should be with her a month, and if in that time we saw no reason to dislike each other, we would then agree upon terms.

I replied, I sincerely hoped she would not find me deficient, and she might be assured

assured I should make it my study to oblige.

After some questions of, how long I had been in town, what part of the world I came from, where I had been educated, to all which I answered, but I thought I would not then tell the meanness of my extraction, for the world is too often governed by exteriors, and I might sink in her estimation, before I had it in my power to cultivate her friendship.

Think not from this, my dear Lady Harriet, that I am ashamed of my parents, no, far from it, for are they not good and honest? But I know you will join with me, that at present it is necessary to be silent.

She took her leave with an assurance of being early with me in the next week.

I bought me cloaths to appear in with the remainder of my money—dread and fear took possession of my heart when I changed the last guinea; if Lady Yateman should alter her mind, if I should not please her, continually tortured my imagination 'till the time expired, when to my great joy I saw the carriage stop, and the same good old Lady in it.

She said she hoped I was ready?

I replied I was quite so.

I soon got my things together, and took my leave of Mr. and Mrs. Ruffel, kissed

kissed their children, and assured them if ever heaven put it in my power I should be happy to return, in some measure, the great obligations I was under to them, ever should I reflect on it with the highest gratitude.

We all shed tears at parting, and it was some time before I could recover my spirits after I had left them.

Adieu for the present.

ISABELLA.

LETTER X.

To Thomas Goodbin, Esq.

FOILED by a mistress, wounded by a friend; a constitution impaired by drinking, and pockets fleeced by gamesters, is at present the state of your Right Honorable friend, but how can it be otherwise, home is truly disagreeable; my father ever preaching, ever gloomy, and upbraiding me with what he has done for me,

me, and his indulgence in never contradicting me, yet he can never have my company.

I tell him, as to the latter, I own myself much obliged, and that if he ceased reproaches and would be more cheerful, I should be more with him, but as to being indebted more than any child is to a parent, I could not think myself.

He answered, one day or other I should be convinced.

It has often puzzled me what he means by this, but why should I care, if he has done amiss, it is to himself, and well is it it is so ordained, for I fancy I shall find my own deeds black enough without having a father's lumped with them:—But away with conscience, what has an heir to thirty thousand a year to do with thinking? A short life and a merry one, is my motto, and whilst I can enjoy it intemperance be mine.

But to proceed with my story—

I wrote you in my last I was resolved to listen when Habella opened her box in an adjoining closet, I did so. The first thing she did was to kiss the seal. After she had read the contents, she exclaimed, is it possible this can be Lady Harriet's advice? She does not know this vile man, he has deceived both her and the world. My parents dead? Good God!

God! I wanted but this to compleat my misery, this will put a finishing stroke to my existence.

I now almost wished I had not gone so far, 'till she continued thus—

How little do I know of life—How did I fondly imagine his attention, his assiduities, his kindness, was love, how cruelly am I deceived: The thoughts of his affection calmed my afflictions, and in my greatest distress I flattered myself if I could ever regain my liberty I should once more enjoy his beloved company, but now it is over, and I am indeed wretched—O that I were as my parents, for never now but with my life will my miseries end.

I now was resolved to be merciful no longer, the thoughts of a rival enraged me to such a degree; in short, I find I love her to excess. I drank the more to drown reflection, and by night I was compleatly intoxicated, Fitzgerald followed my example, and was just as bad as myself, ripe for every mischief.

I told her before what she had to expect. We got as far as her chamber door, which I imagine I unbolted; Fitzgerald followed me close, the liquor had made him ungovernable and me quarrellsome, we had high words about the lass, our swords were drawn, and
ten

ten to one they had not been through each other's body, but our hands were not steady enough to guide them to such a finishing stroke, but I soon found the steel had penetrated my wrist, this forced me to drop my sword, and call as well as I could for help.

I fainted through loss of blood, and my companion was fallen insensible by my side—when the servants came to our assistance they carried us both to our beds, and immediately ran for a surgeon.

I suppose, then it was Isabella, finding the door not barred, made her escape, we did not discover this elopement 'till late the next morning, all our pains to trace her have yet been ineffectual: Fitzgerald is now very penitent, has asked my pardon a thousand times, swears it was entirely owing to liquor. The surgeon told me the wound would be soon healed, but from loss of blood it would be some time before I recovered my strength.

My father thinks me still in the country, I wrote him a letter as soon as I could use my hand, to assure him I was well, and so pleased with the country that I could not think of leaving it this three weeks; all which he swallows, little thinking I am so near him, and have been within an ace of departing this life.

Q that

O that I could but have her once more in my possession, she should not trick me again, I promise her, whilst there were locks and bolts to be got.

My hand grows troublesome, I can only add if you see a person that you think likely to be my runaway, stop her, confine her, misery shall then be her's, and sweet revenge be mine. I am mad with despair, far beyond the power of words to paint—I love.

Your's eternally,

FREDERICK.

LETTER XI.

*Isabella Humphrys to Lady Harriet
Armstrong.*

MY DEAR LADY HARRIET,

ONCE more I resume my pen to acquaint you with my proceedings, I had been with Lady Yeatman a month, when she said, this morning the time expires when we are to declare our sentiments of

of each other, it will be needless for me to say how much I am pleased with your company, for I hope my actions have in some measure shewn my regard, but the melancholy I now and then see in your countenance makes me fear you are not equally pleased.

I am sorry, Lady Yeatman, I replied, my looks should indicate a thing so foreign to my heart as even the idea you just mentioned; I must be the most ungrateful of human beings were I not perfectly happy, perfectly satisfied with my situation, and I should now be as miserable, as I am the contrary, if I had not the good fortune to meet your approbation. No, Madam, believe me, 'tis not from the cause you attribute it that my mind appears not entirely at ease, the present is perfectly pleasing, but thoughts cannot be controuled, but will often stray to past events, and from thus reflecting arises the gloom you speak of.

Is it possible, (rejoined her Ladyship) a person so young should have experienced the ills of life, though indeed there is no age, no station, exempt from sorrow.

It was only the last year, Madam, (I returned) that I have been acquainted with it, my life 'till then glided on in one uninterrupted state of tranquillity; from my infancy I have been a recluse,
saw

saw no person but my parents and my godmother, their partiality and goodness left me not a wish, and heaven blessed me with health and spirits, that what I had to do was cheerfully accomplished—the loss of the latter was the first fatal stroke to my peace, and a presage of future calamities, for from that time 'till I resided with your Ladyship, my heart has known but little rest.

I can hardly beg a favor of your history, our acquaintance has been too short to admit me as a confidant, but when we have lived longer together, I shall wish you, my dear Louisa, to relate a little of the past; however we will now drop this subject to talk of the present—Do not think I mean to hire you like a servant, but it is necessary you should have pocket money, and if you will accept of an hundred pounds a year for that purpose, the obligation will be on my side.

I thanked her in the best terms I possibly could:—I have now been a quarter of a year with her and find no alteration, she is the same benign good woman I at first found her.

One day I was sitting rather in a pensive mood, she said, if it would be quite agreeable she should like to hear what had drove me from my native home,

home, for by my superior education I must have had more flattering expectations; but think not, my Louisa, that if it is not so, if I should find your relations not in the line of life your accomplishments promise, that I should look upon you in a worse light; I am not governed as the generality of people are, who imagine, that no merit can ever be found in a low station, and that only birth and fortune can constitute respect; —No. I was taught from my youth, to think very differently, and by my parents told how much more meritorious it was to draw the truly deserving from obscurity than to lavish sums (as many did) on those that did not want, or had no merit to encourage such a partiality.

This conversation, my dear Madam, (I returned) gives me resolution, for to one of your liberal way of thinking I shall not scruple to own that I am no more than a poor shepherd's daughter.

I then told her every past occurrence. When I had finished she arose and embraced me. I esteemed you before I knew your history, but your distresses, my dear Louisa, have made me doubly your friend, and you shall ever find me so be assured, but to me there appears a kind of mystery in some parts you have related that deserves particular attention.

I asked

I asked her what passages she meant.

She said my birth, Mrs. Buckley and my mother's lying in at the same time, might there not be an exchange made of infants? Her great love for me, her educating me in the manner she did, which a woman of her good sense must know was too great for the daughter of a labourer and quite out of character, without she could have given me a fortune to answer it; her wishing to disguise my complexion, to hide the mole in my face; what can this indicate but some hidden mystery, but that you are her child. The housekeeper at the Duke of Preston's being so inquisitive, your seeing such a resemblance betwixt the late Duchess and Mrs. Buckley, your being forced away and interrogated about her and your family, all bespeak it.

She sat some time in deep thought. It is now almost twenty years since I heard her mentioned, I saw her once, she was remarkably handsome, and the Duke the same.

What kind of woman was she, Madam?

She was your height, a fair complexion, dimples in her cheeks, but as to her features, such a length of time has taken away every recollection.

All corresponds with her description, (I replied) her stature, fairness, dimples,
are

are the same, but as to my being her daughter, I cannot imagine it, the man and his wife that were set as spies would not have connived at such a deception, and my parents, if there were reasons before to cause their silence, at their death they certainly would have divulged it.

She said, she now remembered the Duchess's death was spoke of as something extraordinary, but the particulars she never heard, for it was kept a secret, but there was a lady intimately acquainted with her, whom she visited sometimes, she would go now, and from her perhaps might learn some particulars that might be of service to me—I thanked her very sincerely for interesting herself in my concerns.

I really think there is a great probability of my dear godmother being the Duchess of Preston, as the manner of her death was concealed, but as to my being so nearly related I am convinced it cannot be.

LETTER XII.

Mr. Harcourt to Mrs. Bowen.

DEAR SISTER,

THE end of next week is the longest time I mean to stay in town, I am tired with a fruitless search, never shall I again see the loveliest of her sex, she is fled for ever, and what augments my trouble, uncertain of my love; had I made her a declaration of my sentiments, I might have had a place in her heart, but now perhaps she has married this Bond, and gone to live with him in some distant part of the world: this thought harrows up my very soul. Could I live to see her in the possession of another? No, there is madness in the idea, never will I love, never will I think of any one but her, she engrosses my heart, and whilst it beats it beats for her.

I have been unwearied in my enquiries, there is not a house in Salisbury that I have not asked questions at, or sent my emissaries to do it, I am now convinced

convinced 'tis all a fiction, invented to deceive her friends.

I have since been in London, thinking that the most eligible place to secrete her, though at the same time assured it was next to an impossibility to find her, yet I went, supposing if she had the liberty of going out with him I might catch a sight of her at some public place, I therefore frequented every one, but disappointment still attends my steps, even the shadow of hope is fled, and my only consolation will be to visit those scenes that once gave her pleasure; her parents and her favorite lamb shall be my care, I will make an addition to her cottage, and will erect an handsome tomb in memory of her godmother, nothing shall be wanting in my power to shew my love for her, and my respect to all she valued; this and the soothing friendship of you my dearest sister Bowen and my friends at Belleville, may in time bring peace to a mind that has so long been a stranger to it, but never can I be thoroughly at ease 'till I know what is become of her.

I shall follow this epistle rather sooner than I intended, for every day here adds to my uneasiness, believe me ever affectionately

Your's,

CHARLES HARCOURT.

LETTER XIII.

Lady Maria Bently to Mrs. Grenville.

DEAR MRS. GRENVILLE,

WE are at last preparing to leave this charming country; by this day fortnight I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you in town, how glad should we have been to have introduced our dear wood nymph, but alas! I fear that will never be in my power, for she is certainly in the custody of that infamous Duke, and if not murdered, made a close prisoner as her mother was, for though we have never heard her name, yet the likeness of her and her husband in the miniature now in our possession, to that of the late Duke and Duchess's makes it beyond a doubt they are the same, and Isabella their daughter.

Harcourt is again returned without the least account of her. We read him her letter and told him our answer, but kept him in ignorance of her birth by his sister's particular desire, for fear his love
and

and revenge should get the better of his prudence, and he would divulge the secret before a proper time, which might be the means of finishing her life were she still in being, and perhaps putting his own in imminent danger.

He went off to Salisbury, but could get no other information than that a servant came for the box and paid the carriage, he was dressed in a frock, therefore we are as much at a loss as ever, for he was not known to the people, she certainly is not there, nor has ever been, it was done to deceive and put us in a wrong method of finding her—we can do no more.

Our buildings are all very forward, I shall be happy when they are compleated, for I shall long to return to this delightful spot, the very villagers are natural to me, I shall see every tree again with the pleasure of an old acquaintance.

You must be of our party next summer, you will then be a judge of our happiness, for in Henry I find both the lover and the friend, our being united has not diminished the least of his respect, not like the generality of husbands, as soon as they commence masters shew it by their lordly treatment, or by that apathy, that careless inattention so disgusting to every female, and the first step to make

N 2

them

them think meanly of their choice, for they see they have been deceived and cannot depend upon one who appears so different.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith depend on seeing you return with us, and that every obstacle will be removed the ensuing summer, and not like the last, be led on by false hopes, they long to tell you of the Duke's kindness to them.

Could I once have thought, when I left London, partly through his illiberality, that I should return his chief favorite? I declare when I take a retrospect of the past, it seems more like a romance than transactions of real life; but how often do we find good arise from evil, and what we have looked forward to with pleasure has terminated in sorrow and disappointment. To pass thro' life with any degree of comfort I am convinced is to make the best of the present, and not anticipate future ills, to compare our situation with those below us, and not think with envy on our superiors. As to myself, I thank God I have not a wish beyond what I enjoy, and I have the felicity to say, the whole of our society are equally happy, every one of whom desire to be particularly remembered, and look forward to meeting you with unfeigned pleasure, but be assured no one more than.

Your sincere and affectionate friend,

MARIA BENTLY.

ISABELLA, IN CONTINUATION.

Lady Yeatman ordered her carriage with an intent to call on the lady I mentioned by herself, but just as she was going she came back to beg I would accompany her, something had that moment struck her that she wished me to be present, she said, desired I would not wear a cap, that the mole in my temple might be conspicuous. I took it immediately off and went with her as she requested.

After the usual compliments were over I was introduced, she looked very earnestly at me—My God! she exclaimed, who is this Lady you have brought with you, Madam? she is so very like my friend, the late Duke of Preston, if his own daughter there could not be a stronger resemblance—Are you of that family? addressing herself to me.

I have not the honor to be the least related, I replied.

I can scarce persuade myself but you must, (she returned) the very particular mole all that family is remarked for having,

having, your voice, manner, and shape, so like the Duchefs; it is very singular you should refemble both.

I remember, faid Lady Yeatman, fome odd report concerning her Grace's death, but it is fo long fince I have but a very imperfect recollection of it.

Far otherwife is it with me, (returned Mrs. Bifhop) it will never be erased from my memory, I was perfonally acquainted with her, (which I believe your Ladyship knew.)

Lady Yeatman bowed—fhe proceeded.

Knowing and loving her was the fame thing, for no one could be in her company without feeling themfelves interefted. The Duke had been playing at tennis with his brother and fome gentlemen 'till he was in a violent perfpiration, and inadvertently drank cold water, foon after he was feized with a fhivering fit, was brought home very ill, and died in lefs than twenty four hours.

His Duchefs was young with child, and almoft inconfolable, for never was a happier couple—He made his will and left her every thing excepting thirty thoufand pounds, which was to be the child's if it lived, but if it died his nephew was to enjoy it, and the whole of his own fortune after her Grace, the
estates

estates that came by her were also to be his brother's, and his son's, without the Duchefs particularly desired it on will it should be otherwise disposed off.

As for her, she gave up entirely to melancholy, left town, and resided entirely at her seat in the west of England, where she shut herself up from all society, kept but a few domestics, and there she lived forgetting the world and by the world forgot.

She had now gone seven months with child, when one day she told her woman she had a great inclination to extend her walk beyond the terrace; she desired she would take a servant with her; she said, by no means, she could not so freely indulge her thoughts when any one was with her, and what could she have to fear in so retired a place.

Dinner time came, her Grace was not returned, an hour after passed, her servant then told what she said when she went, but when two hours had elapsed they all began to be alarmed for her safety, and were resolved to go different ways in search of her. One of the men saw some shepherds on an eminence that overlooked the country many miles, he went to them and asked whether they had seen his mistress.

Gracious God, (they exclaimed) then I dare say it was our good Lady we saw
so

so roughly handled, we ran to her assistance, but before we could get near the bottom they were out of sight, but had we known it had been her, we would have alarmed the whole country.

They then ran on in her praises, her goodness to the poor, how they should miss her, that the servant could hardly get an answer to his questions; he at last begged them to inform him in what manner she was carried off.

They said they saw a well dressed person walking in yonder field, and at some distance a chaise stopped, two men got out of it, and two more were on horseback, that they walked up to the Lady, and in a moment caught her in their arms and forced her into the chaise, 'till they heard her scream they thought she belonged to them, they ran down the hill with an intent to try to rescue her, but it was too late, the chaise was quite out of sight.

He now hastened home and informed the others of what he had heard, and never I believe was such a house of sorrow, for she was adored by all her servants.

One of them went to the present Duke, to tell him of this sad catastrophe, he pretended to search for her, and expressed great sorrow on her account, but I assure
your

your Ladyship there were some who did not scruple to say he knew better than any one where she was.

He then gave out that he was afraid the people that had been so base to take her away had done it to rob her, and no doubt had murdered and buried her in some obscure place for fear of a discovery; this at last passed current and every one thought her dead, and I myself think it not improbable if they did not then kill her they caused her death, for it is now near twenty years since, and she has never been heard of.

Lord Frederick Osmington took possession of the house, but the Duke I believe has never been in it since his brother's death, what came of her cloaths and jewels I never heard.

Lady Yeatman said, it was indeed strange in so many years there had not been a discovery made; was the present Duke friendly with his sister in law?

She said, not much so, and many people had taken notice how inquisitive he was, when his brother died, to know if she had, or was like to miscarry, and believed he was in hopes fright and sorrow would have had that effect, but it pleased God to crush his mercenary views at that time, though perhaps it might have been the occasion of my dear friend's death.

We now took our leave, and all the time we were on our little journey it afforded us matter for conversation. I agreed with her, I really thought Mrs. Buckley was that unfortunate Duchefs, the number of years, and the manner of her being carried off, all convinced me; but that I was her daughter it was impossible; besides, were it so, it could not be of any service to me now to declare it, but create me powerful enemies in the Duke and his son, for as she was no more my mother, and all my relations dead, I could have no proofs to shew my birth, on the contrary, the people that were set as a guard over her, would swear that the dead born infant was her's, and would it not be still more convincing that the last of my parents that survived should not at their death disclose such a secret, they could then have no fear of the rage and power of the great, and would not their regard for me have instigated them to have told this secret to my friends at Belleville, if their fears for my safety had hitherto prevented them from speaking it publicly? and you know, Madam, I have heard from them an account of their deaths, but not the least hint of any such matter.

She coincided there with me, that this appeared rather against it, but yet she
was

was in her own mind perfectly satisfied; for though, my dear Louisa, (she said) the truth is at present enveloped in a cloud, if you are the identical child, I do not doubt but there will be some means given by Providence to dispel the present darkness, and you will stand confessed by every person what you are now in my opinion.

Lady Yeatman is quite a second Mrs. Buckley to me, she carries me to all her acquaintance and introduces me as a distant relation.

I have met several times at different houses a young Baronet of unexceptionable character and fortune, he has been so obliging to prefer me to any of his female acquaintance, and has absolutely spoke to her Ladyship about me, she told him I had no fortune, but very kindly spoke in my favor.

He replied, money was not his object, he had sufficient to keep a wife genteelly without an addition from her, indeed he was glad I had none, that I might be assured he regarded me alone, and that he would settle just as much on me as if I brought him many thousands, begged she would be so good to speak for him.

She has indeed very strenuously, but my foolish heart rebelled, I cannot give my hand when my affections do not coincide.

coincide. Perhaps it may be thought romantic in me that am a poor dependant, to reject so good an offer, because I cannot love, but those are sentiments that never will be, or ever do I wish to eradicate.

I always think of a young man that lived near my friend the pastry cook's, who by some means or other had run through a genteel fortune, when checked by his friends, and told the ill consequence of his going on so, answered, he was very indifferent about the matter, for when he had nothing left he would marry a woman of fortune, which would give him an independence, and, as he simply termed it, make himself easy for life—he had one in view, that he was sure would not deny him.

They knew who he meant, and assured him she was not the person calculated to make him happy.

He would not hear it, but even grew a subtle reasoner, to point out perfections in her, and had argued so long that he really thought her possessed of some good qualities, and in spite of every remonstrance was married when he could borrow no longer, his debts were paid, and he became independent!

But the mist was now dispelled, and with it vanished all his promised felicity—

city—the woman appears with all her imperfections, and he, when too late, saw that riches could not command happiness.

It is needless to say after this, I rejected him, however, in such a manner I refused that he is still my friend, and I really believe would do me all the service in his power.

I have had so much to talk of about my own affairs that I had entirely forgot to tell you how pleasantly we are situated, the village is one of the prettiest I ever saw, a pleasant ride from Newmarket, the races begin next week, as it is so near, Lady Yeatman tells me she generally goes, not so much to see the races as to meet her acquaintance, I am to attend her, and have a riding dress making for the purpose.

The races are over, and we returned to our pleasant villa, and heartily glad I am we are so, for the hurry and bustle of such public meetings are to me very disagreeable.

The second day two gentlemen passed us very quick, but the little I saw of their faces assured me one was Mr. Bond and the other his companion, the colour flew into my face at the idea of being so near a man I had so much reason to fear, and it was not the change my skin had undergone

gone could make me think I was secure ; they rode back again and bowed to her, which she returned with a gracious nod as if she had been intimately acquainted.

Mr. Bond stared me full in the face and spoke to the other, who did the same, and then galloped off.

I said, are those gentlemen known to you, Madam ?

Yes, my dear, (she replied) it is Lord Frederick Osmington, son to the Duke of Preston, he that keeps you out of your fortune I firmly believe.

And that, Lady Yeatman, (I returned) is the very Mr. Bond who kept me so long a prisoner, for God's sake do let us avoid him, for a thousand fears possess my heart at the sight of him—and who is the other ?

Sir John Fitzgerald.

He also passed for a Mr. Barton.

She was so obliging to order her carriage home instantly, not, (said she) my Louisa, I think it is possible he should know you to be the same he had in his custody, but if that he was so fond of you when almost a tawney, how much more must he admire you now you are so fair ; but he could scarcely notice you they went by so fast, I sincerely hope he did not, for setting aside what you told me of him, I know him to be a very gay young

young man, one that has never been contradicted by his father, or controuled, and whenever he sets his heart upon a thing, he will shrink at nothing for the accomplishment of his wishes, and we two poor women may find it hard to encounter with such a wild ungovernable youth; but your sad story will make me doubly cautious to avoid him.

The day after our return, as we were walking in the garden, who should enter but Lord Frederick, he came, he said, to pay his respects to her Ladyship, hoped she was well after the fatigue of the races; her going away so suddenly had made him fear for her health—he bowed very distantly to me, but I saw he could not keep his eyes from my face—He asked how long I had been in that part of the world, that he had never the pleasure of seeing such a divinity before.

Her Ladyship said, I had been with her a long time, but that we had been very little from home.

He staid with us more than an hour. I trembled so much all the time that I was obliged to have recourse to drops as soon as he was gone.

Some days afterwards my Baronet as I call him, came and begged us to be upon our guard, for he had over-heard a conversation, as he was walking in the wood,

wood, betwixt Lord Frederick Osmington and a gentleman, that made him apprehensive for my safety, he then repeated it.

I thanked him a thousand times, and indeed saw too much cause to fear.

My good friend said it was almost the time she usually went to town, on my account she would set off immediately, for she dreaded my being again in his power, as she did the loss of my company, which she was pleased to say would be to her the greatest misfortune that could befall her—the chariot was ordered for the next day, and our things to be packed and sent after us.

When we were about the middle of the wood we were accosted by three highwaymen, one rode up to the postillion and presented his pistol, and with an oath swore, if he did not stop he would instantly blow his brains out; the other did the same by the footman, whilst the third came to us demanding our money and watches.

We were going to deliver them, but he said, they had been tricked two or three times by people slipping their cash behind them, therefore insisted on our getting out, that they might search. In vain did we assure them we did not want to secrete ours, they were peremptory and we obliged to comply.

The

The instant we were out of the carriage one of them took me in his arms, and, in spite of all my cries and Lady Yeatman's entreaties, ran into the wood with me, where, at some distance was a chaise in waiting; the others staid with her Ladyship 'till they had thought I was out of hearing, they obliged me to get into it, drew up the blinds, whilst I, half fainting, was once more in the power of that detested man.

We travelled 'till night without exchanging one word, when we stopped at the door of a large house, which I was made to enter, but, judge my surprise when I found it was the Duke of Preston's superb mansion.

As I passed the room where the late Duchess's portrait was I burst into a flood of tears, which a little relieved my depressed spirits. I was shewn into an inner parlour by the housekeeper, (it was not the same that shewed us the house) she desired me to be seated and then gave me a letter from Lord Frederick in it, were a number of professions that his love had forced him to behave to outward appearance so ill, but that I might be assured every respect and attention should be shewn me, that he would never appear without my permission, that the servants in the house had orders to be-
have

have to me as they would to a person whom he hoped one day or other to make his wife, every thing but liberty I should command, he had never truly loved 'till he saw me, &c.

I asked where her master was.

She said in London.

Might I believe you, said I.

She assured me again he was, but in a few days she supposed he would be there, for his regard for me appeared too great to admit of his being long absent.

After a very slight supper I went to bed—the next morning, accompanied by the servant, I walked over the house, she did not then know I had been in it before, I could not help stopping once more to look at my dear godmother, a sigh involuntary burst from my heart.

She saw my attention and expressed her astonishment at the great resemblance there was in my face to the Duke's, the very mole in the temple you have, Madam, I suppose then you are one of the family?

I waved the conversation, for I really thought I had better let her think so, as perhaps she might shew me more respect than if she took me only for a mistress of her Lord's.

I have just received another letter, he is very ill, I thank God I shall now have
a longer

a longer respite: I walk on the terrace every day, but this woman always follows me—what will be the end? Oh that I could look into futurity!

LETTER XIV.

Lord Frederick to Thomas Goodbin, Esq.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

ONCE more I have Louisa in my custody, would I had her heart as secure as her person, I should then be the happiest of mortals, but that is too great a felicity for me to experience—she is too good, too virtuous, ever to like a man whom she has seen nothing but ill by, who has behaved more like a savage than a rational creature.

If my head will let me I will tell you how I became so fortunate to find her, but I really am downright ill, a troubled conscience is rather disagreeable just now, I suppose you will think I speak it feelingly, by my penitential manner of writing, and that when I'm better those qualms

qualms will vanish; I tell you this, I shall be tempted to marry her if I cannot subdue her any other way, in spite of all my father's remonstrances, which I expect in abundance if I persevere in this intention.

But to proceed—

I was at Newmarket, passing Lady Yeatman's carriage I caught a glimpse of one of the finest faces I ever saw, I soon returned, but how was I surprised to see the same features, the same person, all but the complexion, as my runaway? She passes for a relation of her Ladyship's, and goes by the name of Louisa Joyeux, how she came by so fair a skin is beyond my comprehension, as to her changing her name I imagine it was that I might not find her, if ever she was mentioned in company.

It is impossible for me to mistake her, she is too deeply imprinted on my heart; as to her former complexion it was borrowed I am certain, perhaps put on to conceal herself from my father, or to answer some particular purpose, for I remember, whilst he was examining her, he said to me in French, her skin is sufficient to convince me she is not Mrs. Buckley's daughter.

I asked him afterwards what he meant by that, supposing she was, why should

he

he be troubled about that, certainly it could make no difference to him whose child she was?

He replied, it would, a very material one, but after that was totally silent on the subject, and my head was too full of schemes to think a second time about it 'till this alteration in her makes it occur.

There is I believe a mystery in her birth, it is impossible she can derive her being from shepherds, but why his Grace should be concerned in it I cannot define.

I have sent her down to my seat at Preston, and have ordered the servants to shew her great respect, I intended going there to day had I not been so much indisposed.

I can hardly command this stupid head to keep to one subject—I had even forgot that I sat down in order to tell you what stratagem I made use of to secure her.

I followed them the day after their races, with a pretence to enquire after her Ladyship's health, who otherwise might have gone to the lower regions for what I cared, but did not go again for fear of being suspected. I kept in the neighbourhood and had my spies about the house, and one of their servants in pay, that I knew all the transactions.—He told me a Baronet paid his addresses to

to her, but that she had refused him, yet he still visited there, and they all thought she would change her mind, as their Lady was much for him.

This account made me almost mad, and put me on setting my wits to work to prevent it. At last he came with the intelligence that they were going to town the next day.

I now got my trusty servants to personate highwaymen, stop their carriage, and demand their money. We did so, for I was of the party; when I saw she was disposed of I told her Ladyship in a feigned voice she was now welcome to pursue her journey. I came immediately to town that I might not be suspected, they went a different route and safely landed her at Preston, where I hope to be to-morrow—Do not you think I managed cleverly?—If ever you want assistance this way, command your friend,

FREDERICK.

LETTER XV.

Isabella Humphrys to Lady Yeatman.

THAT I am permitted to write to my dear Lady Yeatman is a satisfaction I
vant

want words to express; I fancy you, my dear friend, was at no loss to guess who the highwayman were when you saw that demanding our money was only a scheme to get me into their power—Lord Frederick must stand confest.

I was brought to his seat, at Preston, the same place you have heard me describe, where I first saw my dear god-mother's picture, and from that time date all my troubles, excepting what I felt at her death. The servants were ordered to shew me the greatest respect; I have now been here almost a month.

About a fortnight since the servant told me her young Lord was very ill, otherwise he would have been with me the day after I came.

I prayed to God to give him a sense of his errors, and that he might see in a just light his base treatment of me: his not being with me I suppose must occasion the difference, but I feel much happier than when I was last confined by him—I traverse the stately rooms; here, I say, my dear Mrs. Buckley lived, I go into her closet, walk up and down the terrace, and feel a kind of pleasing sorrow that I am now in a place that once belonged to her, I pass many hours contemplating her dear resemblance.

One day as I was looking towards the road a coach and six with several servants

vants attending drove to the door, I had at that time such a palpitation at my heart, that I held by the window curtains to keep myself from falling, yet I was resolved to see who came out of the carriage, when to my great astonishment the old Duke first made his appearance, and his son, borne in the arms of two servants slowly followed, accompanied by another gentleman—I went to my room resolved to remain there 'till I heard from some one or other.

In about two hours his Grace sent a very polite message, that he should be glad of my company, I immediately went, but not without fear and trembling.

When I came in he rose from his seat, he looked at me very earnestly, his colour came and went, all bespoke the utmost perturbation; at last he begged I would be so obliging to make tea for him.

I sat down without speaking.

After many minutes silence, he said, I am no stranger, Madam, to your ill usage from my son, and that it was by force he tore you from your friends, he has confessed every particular of that transaction, and is truly sorry his ungovernable passion should have hurried him to such lengths, but he is now a sincere penitent, and has begged me to plead for him—O that he had been conscious

scious of his errors before, it would have checked him in his wild career, and I should not then have felt the anxiety, the sorrow, I now experience, for I shall not, cannot long have the happiness of saying, I have a child.

What, my Lord Duke, is your son then so very ill to fear his death?

He replied, so much so, Madam, that his physicians will not flatter me with a hope.

I am very sorry, Sir, on your account, and on his also, now he is sensible he has acted wrong, and I should hope, if God thought fit to give him a longer life, he would reform, and be a comfort to you.

And can he find pity from you, Miss Joyeux?

And forgiveness, both, my Lord, they are synonymous; in the state you represent your son, I should think myself dead to every sense of feeling to be deaf to his entreaties.

You are too good, it is more than he could expect, yet one favor I have to request by his particular desire.

Speak it, my Lord Duke?

That you would tell him yourself so?

I had rather not see him, Sir.

I am afraid then you are not sincere.

He will not think me so, when I relate it?

I will attend you, Madam, and not leave the room whilst you are in it;

think, it is the request of a dying man: I have no other hope but the sight of you and your pardon may make a change, therefore for my sake—

I saw the tear ready to start, and I could not then refrain giving my hand. He took it, bowed, and led me into his son's room, his heart seemed too big for utterance.

By the time we came to the top of the stairs he had summoned all his resolution, and affected a cheerfulness which I easily perceived was foreign to his heart.

Frederick, I have brought you the lady you have been so desirous of seeing, he said.

He raised himself on his bed, and with a countenance where indeed death seemed seated, and a faltering voice, begged my forgiveness.

I came, my Lord, for that purpose, (I answered) you have it most sincerely, and ardent wishes for your recovery.

The first, my dear Isabella, (permit me to call you so) has given me the greatest pleasure I can possibly feel on this side eternity, but as to the last, I am too far gone.

He could go no farther, for he was but just recovered from a very severe fit, and I was permitted to leave the room.

When I came to my own I felt myself so much affected by the alteration I saw in Lord Frederick, the grief of his father, and

and the oddness of my situation altogether, that I really was almost deprived of reason—to see the haughty Duke, that but for this would have spurned me from him, now become a suppliant; for in what an austere manner did he behave when he represented Mr. Bond, for I knew him to be the same the instant I came in, though he was then so differently dressed.

The next day as I was going into the parlour I heard a talking and my name mentioned, which made me stop, I own the wishing to hear what they said and thought of me, and how they intended to proceed, made me go into the next room, where only a thin partition parted, there I could distinctly hear every word of their conversation.

What can be the meaning, (said the gentleman) my Lord Duke, that in his fit of delirium he has so often repeated, that though Isabella was but a shepherd's daughter, he preferred her to all her sex; she could not deceive him, for he knew Louisa Joyeux and Isabella Humphrys were the same?

This is a meer phantom of a disordered brain, (his Grace answered) for I once saw the person he alludes to, and they are very different people; besides I have enquired about her particularly, and find she is a poor relation of Lady Yeatman's, one she has taken as a kind of humble

companion, out of meer charity: Yet, though I know this, I never see her but I feel a palpitation at my heart, a something that seems to humble me to her origin, and exalt her to mine—What can be the meaning of this?

I know not, my Lord, (returned the other) any reason to be given than that her superior understanding, manner and person, commands that respect that birth only is entitled to.

But by what my dear Frederick has said she must have been in his custody before this?

Yes, Sir, I believe this is not the first time she has experienced ill treatment from your son.

Do you think her virtuous?

From my heart, spotless as an angel, Lord Frederick has proclaimed her so an hundred times, and says, were he to recover, without you consented she should be his wife, he must be miserable—indeed he declares, without her life is not desirable, and would not your Grace agree to his happiness?

There is no knowing the heart, Mr. Benson, how it would act under different circumstances—the drowning mariner prays and vows to the Almighty, if he is saved he will never swear another oath, yet, when danger is over, his penitence is entirely forgotten—the sinner, when death approaches, wishes for life

life only that he may repent, yet, when rescued from the brink of eternity, with his health return his follies, and still oftener are his future days marked with more vices than the former. At present, were he to ask me, in hopes of making him satisfied I should not deny him, but were he to recover, I could not answer for myself.

I now stole back to my chamber and sat down to think how I had best act, at last I determined to ask the Duke's permission to return once more to you, my good friend.

The next morning whilst we were at breakfast, after asking how Lord Frederick did, on his Grace's tell me he had slept better that night than many preceding ones, which he imputed to my kindness, and what he should do to acknowledge the high sense he had of the obligation I had confirmed on him, I took courage, said I was happy to hear his son was better, and I hoped he would continue so, and as he was pleased to look upon himself in some degree obliged to me, I had a favor to beg in turn.

Any thing (he replied) he could do compatible with what he had already promised I might command.

I told him, it was, that he would permit me to go to my former residence.

He said he was sorry I asked the only thing that was not in his power to grant,
for

for that he had given his honor to his son not to part from me.

I thought it cruel (I returned) to be detained a prisoner, that he had no right to debar me of liberty, but that if he still persisted to detain my person, he should find my mind was not to be enslaved, nor arts, nor threats should ever make me subservient to their purposes.

He was so surprised at my language that it took from him the power of words, he sat some time in deep thought, You are right, Madam, and I am to blame; but consider, fair Louisa, the predicament I now am in; put a dying son's petition against your's, you will not upbraid but pity: for though at present hope may flatter, yet despair treads so close on its heels, that I am afraid even to grasp at its shadow—So far I will with pleasure agree, if you will be so good to join my request with your's, in begging the favor of Lady Yeatman's company here; I should hope she would not deny you, and I should esteem it the greatest obligation her compliance; you will then be assured we mean you no harm, and you will enjoy the conversation of your friend without infringing on my son's happiness.

I thanked his Grace, and told him, since I had this felicity granted me, I would not repine, but leave it to the disposer

poser of all events to dispose of me as he thought right.

I hope, my dear Lady Yeatman, you will not think me presumptuous when I entreat this favor, I cannot say half I wish, to enforce it, my present, and perhaps future felicity hangs on your answer. I beg you will be so kind to order your housekeeper to send my cloaths, for I have been forced to borrow linen of the servants here.

I am, with the greatest respect and esteem, your Ladyship's obliged and affectionate humble servant,

ISABELLA.

LETTER XVI.

Lady Yeatman to Isabella.

MY DEAR ISABELLA,

IT gave me the utmost pleasure to hear from you, and to be assured you are now, though a prisoner, safe from those alarms that attended you in your last confinement. The ways of heaven are said to be dark and intricate, puzzled with mazes and perplexed with errors, but in your life, from beginning to the present time, we can trace the sacred clue leading from one step to another, and every variation.

riation still bringing you towards the great event.

Your first being found by the family at Belleville, led to your seeing the Duke's house, this was the means of your being known to Lord Frederick; from your residing with me your second confinement followed, and now his illness the cause of his father's coming to Preston Lodge—this I am certain, the same Almighty Power that has protected you hitherto, will, in its proper time, convince the Duke that all his deep contrivances, his well laid schemes are mere cobwebs, that what he thought buried in oblivion will be revealed, and he made to acknowledge the daughter of her whom he persecuted, the child whose life he fought, the sole heiress of his immense fortune.

My anxiety when I lost you was inconceivable, my mind at once pointed Lord Frederick the aggressor, and I made an excuse to call at the Duke's on purpose to know whether he was at home: his Grace's chaplain came to me, and on enquiring after the family's health, he said, the young Lord was very ill, and his father almost distracted at seeing him so.

I asked whether he kept his bed?

Yes, my Lady, (he said) and is at present delirious; he had a fall from his horse last evening, and I believe he was dragged, for he was brought home with his head swelled and his coat torn, where
he

he was going we know not. He raves about one Isabella, says, he has her again safe, nor angels, nor devils, shall ever take her from him now, but who she is we cannot find, or whether there is such a person in existence.

I then begged of him, if he could, to learn the place he had carried the Isabella he talked so much of, for she was my friend he had acted so villainously by.

He looked astonished, and begged to know my reasons for thinking so.

I gave him the whole detail, of our being stopped on the road, that he had seen you with me at the races, and had followed us from thence, but not a word that he knew you before that time.

He promised me that he would try every method to find where he had concealed you, and let me hear instantly. I then left my compliments and took my leave, quite pleased I had got some intelligence of you, and flattered myself with a hope I should soon hear the whole, but I suppose their sudden departure prevented the information.

I have sent your cloaths, and will be very early with you the next week, for I should think myself wanting in regard, and was any thing to happen to you contrary to my hopes, in some measure necessary, were I to refuse being with you at such an exigence.

My best respects attend his Grace, and
believe me,

My dear Louisa,
With the greatest esteem and friendship,
Your's affectionately,

PHILLIPPA YEATMAN.

I have sent the Bank Bill you intended
to your friend, the pastry-cook, with
your love.

LETTER XVII.

Isabella Humphrys, in Continuation.

HOW truly happy I am to inform you,
my dear friend, Lady Yeatman, is ar-
rived, the Duke received her with the
greatest respect, and with tears told her
of his unhappiness in regard to his son,
begged her to intercede with me to pro-
mise not to leave him whilst his life was
in danger, and also that I would not re-
fuse going with her once or twice a day,
(if she should be so kind to accompany
me) to see him. She promised him she
would try to prevail on me to acquiesce,
and did not doubt as Lord Frederick was
so sincere a penitent, I should comply.

She repeated their conversation to me,
and enforced it with wishing me to do so.

I told

I told her, any thing she thought right I would certainly agree to, she knew more of the world than I did, and to her superior judgment I would ever submit; she had been so very good to come to me that I could not deny her any thing—Indeed I sincerely pitied his deplorable situation, and though the Duke had been guilty of such baseness to my dear god-mother, yet to see him nearly deprived of his only child, to hear his sighs, to be witness of his distress, has made me feel for him, and that she may assure his Grace, that whilst her Ladyship remained at Preston Lodge I should have no wish to leave it, for she was my only friend that I could fly to for protection, all my Belleville ones being at too great a distance to help or receive me—would you were come home, three long years you wrote you should be absent, the time is not half expired; many a longing look do I send that way, if you were there now I would find some means of seeing you.

I was summoned, by the Duke, to attend him, and my dear friend to his son's chamber.

When I entered he held out his hand towards me, bowed his head to her Ladyship—My dear Isabella, this is very kind of you to cheer me in my last moments with your presence, O let not your goodness end here, but extend it to my poor father, let him in you find a child, a comforter,

comforter, when I am no more—O that there was a lawful claim, but I cannot ask—

He now had such a fit that I thought him expiring, his father was so affected at the beginning that he had left the room, Lady Yeatman called for his physician, he had my hand so grasped in his that it was a long time before I could get it from him—I was obliged also to quit the room, the scene was indeed too much for my weak spirits.

When he recovered he asked if I was gone, desired to speak to the Duke and her Ladyship.

When they came, he begged his Grace not to mourn for his approaching dissolution, for had God thought fit to have granted him a longer life, he, in all probability might have gone on in the same dissipated manner, that instead of being a comfort he must have been a continual source of anxiety and fear to him, and whenever he paid the debt to nature, he should, by having his life prolonged, have treble the sins to answer for, for though they were at present great, and hung heavy on his heart, yet, then they might have been too much so to obtain mercy—that in Isabella he would find a consolation, entreated him, for his sake, he would look upon her as his daughter, had he lived his greatest ambition would have been to have made her so, by every human

human tie, though he said, his actions had been such he had no right to expect so great a blessing, yet he should have hoped his affection, his sincere repentance, his endeavours to please, might in time have made her forget all his former faults had imprinted on her mind.

He stopped to gain a little breath and then proceeded.

Would she but now consent to let him die her husband, that his father might have some title to her friendship, he should leave the world in peace—Shall I beg the favor of you, my dear Madam, to mention it to her, to entreat it? And you, Sir, to consent? He was now quite exhausted, he could add no more.

My dear son, I will consult with this good lady and let you know the result, in the mean time make yourself easy, for I will wave many obstacles to satisfy you.

Lady Yeatman told me, as soon as they were by themselves he said, my dear Madam, divest yourself of all partiality for Louisa, and tell me what you think of this request; you know her and her family, whether I may without degrading myself, accept her as a daughter? Her person and manner bespeak her of no mean origin, at the same time her situation tells me she is a dependant.

My Lord Duke, (she replied) you and I have come to that time of life when
pride,

pride, pomp, greatness and homage should lose its consequence, when vice ought to be stripped of its gaudy trappings, and virtue and white robed innocence appear in all its genuine charms; when the mist of ambition, flattery, and adulation, is taken from our eyes, and when many a heart shudders at the unjust means that have been used to secure this ideal happiness, the cool eye of reason should now predominate, and we own that nothing but true merit is worthy notice, that all the rest, as the wisest of men has said, is only vanity and vexation of spirit—in short, the hey day of youth is over, and we are become rational and thinking creatures.

The Duke wiped his face and gave such a sigh as if his heart was bursting, without uttering one syllable.

Were Louisa only a labourer's daughter, (for they still call me by that name) I should think her upon an equality with one in possession of the highest titles and fortune, but from my heart I think her birth equal to your son's, at present there is a mystery which I cannot fathom, nor is there a possibility of my putting it out of dispute.

Lady Yeatman, (he said) with a faltering voice, whose daughter do you take her then to be?

Without I was quite assured, my Lord Duke, I cannot mention; the times seem
approaching

approaching that will by some means or other disclose it—but should you, Sir, get over this degradation, as you may think it, to call one of doubtful birth, daughter, I really believe we shall find a great difficulty to make her comply, for though she thinks, and does not know but she is of mean extraction, yet her heart is noble and independent; your son's vices and ill usage has sunk him so low in her opinion, that I am persuaded, nothing but the thinking it would be some consolation to one so near his end, and our persuasions, would influence her—were he well, and made her an offer, she would reject him with scorn.

Your words (he replied) have planted daggers in my heart, I indeed see the fallacy of all human grandeur, my future hopes and views all sink with my son, and the remainder of my life will be filled with bitterness and remorse. But setting aside what I feel, what can be done for my dear child, to make him easy the little time I shall have him with me? If you, Madam, can prevail on your friend to marry him, I shall no longer object to it, and will settle upon her the same jointure as if she had brought into our family the fortune we had a right to expect, and I make no doubt but I shall have that regard for her she so justly deserves—her person and her manner

manner I confess are superior to any I ever met with.

And her temper, my Lord, believe me, is equally pleasing, her sense and accomplishments own no superior, and could you once have the felicity of calling her daughter, she would amply make up for the loss you are going to sustain I am convinced.

Go, my dear Lady Yeatman, use your utmost influence, whilst I will tell Frederick, that he has my consent if he can obtain Louisa's—O that God would but spare his life to enjoy that happiness.

His Grace I found immediately went to tell his compliance—he smiled in the midst of agonizing pain, and thanked his father in terms that shewed how near it was to his heart.

When my good friend came and repeated the conversation I shook from head to foot—Good God! (said I) Lady Yeatman, what distress has this request occasioned me; how can I give my hand to one I have so much reason to hate, my heart sickens at the very idea.

But have you not forgiven every injury, Louisa?

I have consulted his physician, he tells me it is impossible he can live over this week—consider his motive for desiring this favor, it is for the sake of his parent, it is for the sake of leaving you in affluence, romantic love is now out of
the

the question. But should he recover, there is nothing impossible, I will never live with him, how then can I promise what I never mean to perform, will it not be perjury in the sight of God?

You may be assured, you will never be put to the test, he cannot live.—Think, when you reflect that you have been so cruel to deny this, his last request, when the Duke begs to call you by the endearing name of daughter, when you might have it in your power to bless thousands, a few hours may perhaps put it out of your option—it seems to me as if Providence had pointed out this method to secure you the possession of what ought to have been your's by birth.

The Duke now came in, and said all he could think to make me comply; he had that good opinion of my feelings and my heart, that I could not refuse giving him the satisfaction of calling me his child: He now saw death approaching, with hasty strides, towards his dear son, when he should cease to be a father, when he should have no relation to care for him, no one to sooth his last moments, and in the midst of affluence he should want a friend.—He put the handkerchief to his eye to wipe away the falling tears.

He now begged, if I would not listen to his entreaties, I would go once more and see Lord Frederick—he got up, Lady Yeatman

Yeatman did the same, I silently followed, and though it was but the day before I saw him, his countenance was so much altered that I could not look at him without tears.

He said, my dearest Isabella, I am glad you are come time enough for me to declare you mine, in a few hours I shall not be able.

The chaplain told him he was ready, the book was brought; the surprise, the hurry, the confusion of my thoughts at that moment were not to be described, and I held out my hand without knowing what I did.

The ceremony began, he was supported in his bed to go through it, and I had almost as much need of it as himself, for my knees shook to that degree I was obliged to lean on her Ladyship's arm the whole time.

As soon as it was over he held my hand to his mouth, desired his father to give him his, put ours together, and said, with a voice scarcely intelligible, my dear Isabella, I thank you for this goodness, be a child to my dear parent; and you, Sir, look on my wife as your daughter—Lady Yeatman accept my acknowledgments. He then turned round, I now die in peace, was all he could say, they were his last words.

We all stood like statues round his bed, his dying so soon had such an effect
on

on me, that I was immoveable, looking on his dead body, 'till at last I was roused by the Duke's falling into a fit.

I ran to him, my own agitation was forgot, and I helped to lift him on a sofa, and ordered the servants to carry him to his own room, I followed with Lady Yeatman, and stood by him 'till he recovered—he squeezed my hand, and said my dear daughter, but could utter no more.

I will pass over the first four months, for indeed it is too melancholy to dwell on: His Grace seemed now to recover his spirits, and seeing me indefatigable in my attendance on him, did all he could to shew his gratitude——Lady Yeatman was still with us, he said, he hoped I would never leave him.

I answered, I never wished to be separated, but when his affairs called him to town, and even then if he desired it, I would give up my inclinations for the country to oblige him.

He thanked me for my kindness, declared he felt himself a father in every sense of the word, and every day he saw more and more the value of his dear Frederick's gift; his stay in town would be never more than two months, and that time I should command as I pleased, so as he had my company the remainder.

We

We walked and rode every day, when the weather would not admit I read, sometimes played on the guitar and sung to him, that he has often been pleased to declare, his Isabella was all he could wish, all he could desire in a daughter.

Seeing him so satisfied, his great kindness, and my good Lady Yeatman's company, I had nothing left to wish but the sight of my friends at Belleville, and a desire once more to see my native home.

This morning his Grace told me he had received letters that obliged him to go to town, that he should not be absent more than six weeks, and if possible he should shorten that time, for my goodness and attention had spoiled him for any other company; he would not desire me to accompany him now, as he knew it was my wish to reside in the country.

Lady Yeatman said, if it was agreeable to me, she should like to embrace the opportunity of going with his Grace, she had affairs to settle that required her attendance, if I did not like to be alone she would postpone it 'till the Duke returned.

I told her Ladyship, I was infinitely obliged to her, that I had not the least objection to being by myself so short a time, but I sincerely hoped I should have the felicity of seeing her, with his Grace, when he came again. He joined in this request

request, and her Ladyship has promised us this favor, which makes our parting not appear so bad, as we are so soon to meet.

His Grace has desired I would call him father, indeed he is so in every respect, he has made me a present of the handsomest carriage I ever saw, and given me all the family jewels, allows me ten thousand a year for pin money, servants wages, &c. he keeps house ten months in the year himself. He gave me also at parting one thousand, and begged to be my banker whilst absent.

I sent an hundred to my friends in London, and begged to have their eldest daughter with me, since which I have received the most grateful letter from them that ever was penned, to thank me, and to say how glad they were to hear of my good fortune, (for I made them acquainted with every thing) and that their daughter was preparing herself to wait on me.

LETTER XVIII.

Isabella to Lady Yeatman.

MY DEAR LADY YEATMAN,

LEFT alone I have time to reflect on every past occurrence, of comparing the present

present with the future, and am thankful to Providence for having preserved me hitherto, and not only taken me out of all my troubles, but blessed me with such an affluence, from a poor shepherd's daughter, that used to carry her father's dinner over the bleak mountains, now to have a number of servants to attend me—from plain Isabella to your Ladyship—and, but for my dear god-mother, how should I have been able to have behaved in such an elevated station?

The thinking on this naturally led me to thoughts of my native home, I longed once more to look on the homely cot, to walk under the shade of those trees that had so often screened my infant face from the scorching sun, to traverse once more those gloomy lofty rooms that had been so long the residence of the best of women; indeed I found this local attachment so predominant that I at last resolved to go, and accordingly ordered the carriage the next day as soon as I had breakfasted—I told the servants to wait in the adjacent village, whilst I walked in the wood, and that I would there come to them again.

When I got to the top of the hill that overlooked the castle, I stood some moments to view it, every former transaction now occurred, and I fell into a deep reverie—the bleating of a lamb roused me, and I thought of my dear Sibella.

I descended

I descended the hill and struck into the wood, when I came to my favorite oak I could not help exclaiming, dear spreading tree, how often have I leaned my head on thy roots when tired with heat, sweet were my slumbers, no fears for the present, no cares for the future, troubled my repose, but my heart, like the sylvan scene around, was calm and tranquil.

Peaceful inhabitants of yonder cot! how much may the bustling world envy your situation! Here it was I first saw my Belleville friends, and here I first met the most generous of men—my poor old parents did not live long to enjoy his bounty.

I really could not find in my heart to leave the wood, every tree, every shrub was natural, time had passed so insensibly that when I looked at my watch I was surprised at the hour:—I leaned on the stile opposite my old habitation, and then considered what those that lived in it must think, to see a well dressed woman there unattended—but I was so delighted to traverse this well known ground, which I had done for so many years fearless of danger, that it never occurred to me how much it might have been altered since I left it, and perhaps had experienced as great a change as myself.

I imagined I saw at a distance my Sybella, and called her by that name,
she

she immediately ran to me, and by every action made me think it her, and that she remembered me, it may be from being used to come when called, I do not pretend to say it was recollection, but I flattered myself it was, and caressed her as I was wont.

On stooping down I discovered a collar round her neck, with the name of Isabella engraved on it: She ran by my side 'till I came to the door of the cot, I was just going to knock when behold, to my great astonishment, it was opened by my good old grandmother; I was dressed in mourning and had a veil over my hat, that she could not know me, and I declare I was so surprised that I could hardly believe but it was her apparition.

She courtesied low, I suppose, (she said) Madam, you are a visitor at Belleville, do pray walk in.

I now got courage to speak—My dear grandmother, do not you know your Isabella.?

She let fall a basin she held in her hand—Gracious heaven have mercy on me! you can never be she—it is, it is. She took me round my neck, my dear child, where have you been all this time? What trouble I have had about you, nor could I rightly enjoy all these good things about us for thinking what was become of you, where you was dead
or

or alive, or mayhap made a prisoner, as Mrs Buckley was.

Now I see you in perfect health, (I said) I am in hopes my grand-father is also alive and well?

Alive, aye, that he is, sure, and never better in all his born days, I look for him in every moment, he will be overjoy'd to see you—Have you been at Belleville, my Isabella? and who are you in mourning for? they be none of them dead I hope?

I replied I had not seen any of the family, the last account I heard was from Lady Harriet, that they were going to France, and she in that letter mentioned both your deaths, that you had died of the small-pox, this prevented me from writing to them, and stopped my enquiries after my two good old parents.

Lord how they must have imposed on her Ladyship, and what lies they must have told her to make her write such stories.

And is not Mr. Harcourt married?

I do not know that he is, I have not seen any of them some time, they have been in London, but he always takes care to pay us the thirty pounds a year, you do not know how many pigs we have got, and chickens, ducks, and turkeys in abundance; we have saved seven golden

guineas, and if we go on so we shall be gentlefolks in time.

I then asked who had built those rooms I saw added to their cottage?

O the same good gentleman that's done all the rest for us, I'm sure he will go to heaven when he do die; he made that room on purpose for you, when come, to play your music, and read and draw in, he told me—do you go in and look at it—and the room above to lye in; gave us money to buy a feather bed, and a nice one 'tis as any body would wish to see, and nice white curtains, and papered it with the prettiest paper that ever I looked at in all my life.

So my dear parent ran on that I believe she never would have ended had not my good grandfather made his appearance, he really shed tears for joy, and said it was almost too much for him, he never thought he should have been so happy to see me again, and though he had now so many comforts, owing to the good gentlefolks of my acquaintance, yet he could never thoroughly enjoy it for thinking of me, fearing I might want a morsel whilst he had such a plenty.

He quite hug'd me, told me I was grown so mainly fair he should not have known me:—And now, said he, do you tell us what has happened to you all this time; but before you begin you shall taste some of our good ale and cheese, and I assure

assure you we have roast meat now every funday.

I found I must comply, and indeed I was rather hungry—I declare I never made a more comfortable meal in my life, my spirits were so much revived to find the dear old couple living, and that it was so much in my power to add to their happiness, the joy I felt was inexpressible.

They again asked what had befallen me.

I looked at my watch before I began, to see how time went, but I had ordered the servants, that if I did not come by such an hour they were to get them some dinner there; I took this precaution in case I should meet with any thing that I should wish to lengthen the time.

Had you seen their honest countenances, as I related every change of my situation, you would never have forgot it.

When I had finished the poor woman fell on her knees and said, how wonderful are the works of God, my dear Isabella, listen to what I shall now tell you, and you, Humphrys, the same, I know your heart, that it will make no difference to us if you hear the truth, for you will still be as good as tho' we were so near a kin to you as you think us, but we been't a bit, you are not our child.

Not your child, we both exclaimed together.

She then told me every thing relating to my birth, which I shall enclose for

your perusal, and that she had given the gold box with the two pictures in it of my own parents, to Lady Harriet. I was vexed to my heart I could not see them, but by her description I was certain it was the Duke and Duchess of Preston.

I once more embraced them, and assured them they should never find any difference in my behaviour, for it was owing to her goodness I now existed, if she had not thought of substituting the dead child I should have been either murdered, or turned an outcast on an un pitying world.

My poor grandfather was so astonished at this account, that he could not articulate a word—At last he said, 'twas hard to give me up after he had so long looked upon me as his child.

I told him he should not, for I would ever look upon him as my parent, and would always call him so.

What though you be the great Duke of Preston's daughter-in-law, and mayhap the dead Duke and Duchess's child, for you must be by what you do tell of your being so like his picture, and Madam Buckley so like her's—I should'nt now wonder you did come out so at last.

I now prepared to take my leave, but promised I would come the next week and stay a night with them if they would get the bed aired, they seemed very unwilling to let me go, 'till I told them my carriage

carriage was waiting for me in the village, and that I should now be late home, I insisted on their taking five guineas, which was all I had about me at that time excepting what I kept to pay the servants expences; the good old man told me he would go so far as the beginning of the parish, but no farther for fear of disgracing me.

Adieu, my dear Lady Yeatman, I make no apology for this letter, as I know you interest yourself in every thing that happens to

Your sincere and affectionate,

ISABELLA OSMINGTON.

LETTER XIX.

From the Same to the Same.

DEAR LADY YEATMAN.

I HOPE you received the papers and letter, ere this, I sent you, with the account of my birth, I long to hear your sentiments, and how you would have me act.

I assure you I wished for the time when I should again see my dear preservers—
when

when it came, I stepped into the carriage with unusual alacrity, the servants I ordered to return and fetch me the next day.

My parents, (for I shall ever call them so) were waiting to receive me, and had killed a couple of their best chickens to treat me with. We talked over again the deception made use of at my birth.

She said, Lady Harriet promised her she would keep the gold box 'till she saw me, but that they had none of them said a word to Mr. Harcourt but I was their daughter, for fear he should go and fight the old Duke or his son, for he was all in such a wrath when he missed you, and said, he would go the world over but what he would find you, he loved you so dearly.

And yet he is married? I returned.

I do not believe a word of it, (she said) for why might not one be as great a story as the other, her Ladyship did not write that letter depend upon it.

It never once struck me 'till then, but I was now almost of her way of thinking.

We went and looked at the castle, as I entered, here, says I, was my dear mother a prisoner so many years without my having the felicity of calling her by that tender appellation—Cruel Duke, to rob her of that consolation and me of that happiness; But God is just—his wicked designs are brought to nought, and the
child

child he was guilty of such cruelty to enrich, is taken from him, and the one perhaps he intended to murder will possess the whole of his fortune.

I staid an hour I believe there, and then went to view my parent's grave, but how was I surpris'd to see a handsome tomb erected: I enquired who had been so good to raise such a monument to her memory.

She told me I need not be at a loss to guess, for the same that had built the rooms, and put a collar on the lamb, and allowed them so handsome a provision, had done it.

Indeed, I said, he was very good, and I should always look upon myself as greatly his debtor.

The next morning I strolled again into the wood, sat down in my old place, with my favorite sheep by my side, and at that time I could hardly persuade myself but all that had happened was a dream, I seem'd so much at home at the foot of the old oak.

I had been sometime seated when I heard a rustling among the trees, I started, but was not long at a loss to find from whence it proceeded, for I saw a gentleman with his gun making towards me. I knew not whether to sit still or go on, but when he came nearer I had nothing to dread, it was Harcourt—he approach'd—stopped—came a little farther.

Mr.

Mr. Harcourt, I said, and held out my hand, have you then forgot the nymph of the wood?

My God! is it possible, and am I so blessed once more to behold you, my happiness is now compleat, without a damp is put to my hopes by——

I thought what he was going to say, for I saw that excessive joy would hurry him to declare sentiments that just now I wished not to listen to, therefore immediately asked for all my Belleville friends.

He said they were all to be there the following week, at present they were in London, and all exceeding well.

I asked why he was not with them?

He said, it was the only consolation he had, as he had not the happiness of finding me, to wander over those places he knew I had been partial to—to think and point out to himself if I were still an inhabitant here, I should have spent some of my hours, and there others——the sheep came running to him and licked his hand.

I told him I had many thanks in store for him, for all his kindness to me and my old parents, for they could not say enough of his bounty. I then asked if my good friends had been in France, and whether he and his Lady had accompanied them.

He looked surprised at those questions, declared they had never been out of England,

England, nor ever had any thoughts of leaving it, and enquired my reasons for thinking so.

I told him I would shew him if he would return to the cottage with me, he gladly acquiesced.

After we had set down, I took a letter from my pocket book, for I always kept it about me, but said, first, Mr. Harcourt, I have that respect for you, that if you will do me the favor of listening, I will acquaint you with every past occurrence, this letter will then come in turn to be heard.

He said, it was a wish he was fearful of speaking, but it made him happy I had so obligingly offered to impart it.

I then gave him a succinct account: Every now and then he would lift up his eyes and exclaim, can there be such monsters in the shape of men! But when I told I was married I saw his colour forsake his face, I took no notice of it, but proceeded to the end, and also added the other part that had been communicated to me—every word expressed wonder and astonishment.

He declared Lady Harriet had never wrote that letter, said every thing to express his extreme happiness that I had at last seen an end to my trouble, and his felicity at again finding me, and what a pleasure it would be to all the family at

Belleville to hear of my being settled so near them.

My time was expired that I had ordered my servants to be at the village, he desired permission to attend me, I thanked him; but begged him to excuse my not granting his request, as it might perhaps set my people a talking and conjecturing, seeing me with a stranger, therefore I would there take my leave of him, but would assure him, as soon as my friends arrived I would pay them a visit. My grandfather accompanied me part of the way, and parted from me with tears.

A week after, as I was walking on the terrace, I saw a coach and a number of horses coming towards the Lodge. I walked towards them, in a moment the ladies left the carriage (and the gentlemen dismounted) and ran with open arms to embrace me—we could scarcely articulate one word, my dear Lady Harriet—Maria—Bowen—I could utter no more.

I was in an ecstasy at the sight of those dear friends; the Duke came forward, I hope, Ladies, you will now make room for the gentlemen, for we all love and respect this Lady equally with you.

I gave him my hand, he saluted, welcomed, and congratulated me, on my present situation and happy return amongst them. Lord Henry, Augustus, the Colonel, and Harcourt, expressed the same satisfaction, and now all was harmony,

mony, love, and friendship. I begged them to take a dinner with me, which they complied with.

Lady Harriet had brought the gold box that was my mother's, we compared them with those portraits of the Duke and Duchess, they were indeed the same.

I said I knew they were acquainted with my former history, and I supposed the latter part Mr. Harcourt had communicated, that there was no occasion of a repetition; but that they should see I never forgot them in the midst of all my troubles, and that though at the time I could hardly think it possible it would ever reach them, yet I took a pleasure in writing and communicating my thoughts to them; that I had continued to converse with them on paper, which I would now give them to peruse at their leisure.

They repeated the contents of their letters, which were suppressed, and that vile one placed in its stead—we did not part 'till late, notwithstanding they had ten miles home.

I long for the time when we are to meet, for I am quite impatient to introduce you to my Belleville acquaintance. I have had a letter from his Grace, filled with affection and love, I answered it, but took no notice of what had happened since his absence.

I remain, with great esteem, dear Lady Yeatman's sincere and obliged friend,

ISABELLA OSMINGTON.

LETTER XX.

Lady Yeatman to Lady Isabella Osmington.

YOUR letter, my dear Isabella, gave me infinite satisfaction. What do you think of my prophesying? Did not I tell you it would terminate in this manner? Every circumstance made it obvious you was Mrs. Burckley's daughter, and that there must be some deception made use of to conceal your being so, not that I am led away with notions too often entertained, that it is impossible a person born of low parentage to conceal it, though taken from an infant and ushered into the great world, as it is for one of high birth, though brought up in a cottage; those are erroneous maxims, it is education alone that stamps the gentlewoman—the late Duchess must have been truly so, and have taken indefatigable pains to form your mind, manner and even person, as it is; and you equal merit in adhering to her precepts, and an exalted genius to learn and retain them, in spite of the rustic behaviour and coarse dialect of those cottagers you were obliged to pass more than half your time with.

I cannot be with you quite so soon as his Grace, my affairs will take longer settling than I hoped or expected.

I called

I called on your pastry-cook and presented them with your last gift, I really thought they would have fell down and worshipped me for only being the bearer of it, I fancy it came in an acceptable time which doubled the value of it; they told me how much a servant had distressed them by breaking open their drawers, and running away with money they had put by for rent.

I asked whether that sum you sent was sufficient to supply the deficiency.

They answered it was more than enough.

I said, I was to inform them from you, that you would send them the same sum yearly, and that as their children grew up you would provide for them in the way that would best suit their capacities and inclinations.

They said every thing that grateful hearts could dictate.

Your little favorite, Charles, came running to me, and said, if I was going to see Miss Louisa begged I would give her that top, for it was the best he ever had, it would almost spin by itself, for he loved her dearly. I could not help repeating it, as it was quite his own, and shows the affection of the little creature.

When we were on the road, the Duke said, shall I now beg the favor of your Ladyship, to inform me, who and where
are

are my daughter's relations, you hinted something as if they were people of fortune but reduced, or at least I understood it so, but I assure you, Madam, were they amongst the lowest, for her sake I would be glad to shew them respect, and not only would I treat them with deference, but set them above the reach of misfortune, by settling on them a genteel independence; I did not care to ask Lady Osmington any questions for fear they may be in that situation that might give her pain to relate.

I replied, I had heard you say, they were all dead, you had not one relation left, though his intentions were equally good, and you would think yourself as much obliged as if they had been living to accept his bounty,

I would not tell his Grace what I suspected, and what indeed is really so, nor that you knew him to be the same that personated old Bond, for fear he might not think so highly of you or me; if he found we were acquainted with all his transactions, he would, of course be assured, we must think very meanly of that heart that could be guilty of them, and therefore your profession of affection, and mine of friendship, must be all deception; not judging the excellency of your heart: that his present behaviour had in a manner obliterated his former unkindness, and that you really felt for his

his recent loss and for the inquietude he laboured under in consequence of his past guilt, and wished with sincerity your endeavours to please, and his sincere repentance, may make him return to happiness and contentment.

I will leave you to tell your history, and make no doubt you will do it in such a manner as to give him as little pain as possible—I shall long to hear how you have proceeded; write me as soon as it is over, and believe me ever

Your's sincerely and affectionately,

PHILLIPPA YEATMAN.

LETTER XXI.

Lady Isabella Osington to Lady Yeatman.

YOUR anxiety on my account deserves my most grateful acknowledgments; I am happy to tell you the trial is past, I have told his Grace to whom I owe my being—but, however, I will relate it in due form and order.

The Duke arrived last Wednesday, and expressed the greatest pleasure at being once more with me, said he had hurried his business that he might shorten the time,

time, then gave me an account of all his transactions, where he went, and who had called on him.

Since, Sir, (said I) you have been so obliging to tell me how you passed your time, it is but right I should acquaint you with the manner I have spent mine in your absence.

I then told him the great desire I had to visit my native home, although I had been informed my parents were dead; in short, I related the whole, Mr. Harcourt's generosity, and our accidental meeting, and by him I had sent a message to my Belleville friends, that they lived in this neighbourhood, and had since been to visit me, and brought the gold box, (my grandmother as I could not help calling her) had given them.

He quite trembled, but begged I would fetch it.

I staid some time before I returned, that he might get the better of his agitation, for he was indeed greatly affected—at last I came.

He opened it, his hand shook, he looked at it several minutes, the tears were almost bursting from his eyes, at last he said, dear Isabella, child of a much injured mother, can you forgive the author of all her misfortunes? Can you forgive your father's brother? Oh, no, I see you cannot; indeed I could scarce hope it.

I knelt

I knelt at his feet and said, my dear Sir, I do, as I hope forgiveness myself: He listened not but still continued.

Pity a man, led away by a false education, by the wishing to enrich an only son at the expence of his honour, honesty, and conscience; forfeited the favor of his God, made one of the best of women miserable, and steeled his heart against every tie of fraternal affection, for the false glare of temporary riches—but the Almighty is just, he has baffled every scheme of grandeur by the death of that son for whose sake I acted so basely, and the only consolation I can receive in this world is from her, (if she will forgive me) I would have sent an orphan on an unpitying world—but I see you cannot even look at me, indeed it is too much to desire.

I ran once more to him, O, Sir, judge not so harshly of my heart, I pity your feelings, and forgive you all my sufferings, and could my dear mother have known how kind you would have behaved to her offspring, she would in her latest hours have blessed and pronounced your forgiveness.

He clasped me in his arms, my Isabella, dearer to me than ever, if the remainder of my life can in any degree make up for the past, it shall be my only study to promote your happiness, and to obtain from heaven pardon for my crimes.

I cannot

I cannot describe the perturbation of my heart when I first saw you, the family likeness which I could not help observing, always flew to my conscience, and I often said to myself, such would have been the daughter of my brother, had I permitted her to live, for though I was not the first cause, yet I condemned myself as the secondary means of her child being dead born, but thank God I have not that sin to answer for.

Indeed we now try our utmost on both sides, he to give me happiness, and I to please and assure him I have a real affection for him. I have desired he will accompany me to Belleville, he says he will with pleasure, for he wishes to be introduced that he might thank them for all their kindness to me—we go to morrow, I will not close this letter until we return.

Our visit is paid.—

After the proper introduction on both sides, my father said, he thought it but right they should be acquainted with all his former cruelties to me and my mother, that they might chuse whether they would admit one guilty of such great enormities to their society again; though I had been so good to forgive him, he could not expect that indulgence from the world.

The Duke got up and gave my father his hand, said, he was no stranger to the
past,

past, he had also been culpable in regard to his now beloved Maria: led away, like him, to place every happiness in riches, there was a time he had thought lightly of one of the most perfect of her sex.

Lady Harriet spoke next—My Lord Duke, you have had your faults and I my foibles, not one of us have been free from errors excepting Maria and Frances, they are Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile.

You see, Mr. Smith, (addressing herself to the good old Rector) I have the Gospel at my fingers end. Since the most injured have pardoned, I think we ought not to notice it, and from this moment let all past grievances be forgot. Now, Mr. Smith, I leave it to you, it is your place to speak comfort to the afflicted.

Far be it from me, Lady Harriet, to speak any other language, where I see true penitence; I had much rather give absolution, and receive one sinner into the pale of the church, than excommunicate a thousand, yet, suffer me, Sir, to tell you, I am so well acquainted with the hearts of this good company, that had you visited here before you had a just sense of your errors, though politeness might have made them receive you with complaisance, yet the visit would never have been returned. Your Grace
will

will then see what we all think of you by your reception.

Indeed, my Lord Duke, (said the whole) we shall ever be happy to see you, they all now shook hands, and the day was spent with the greatest satisfaction on both sides.

My father could not speak enough of the happy family, said, he did not wonder at my great partiality, every body must admire and love them that knew them, we visit and are visited every day.

I have taken my father to see Mr. Smith's habitation, and pointed out Lady Maria and Mrs. Bowen's goodness to the villagers, we have both resolved doing the same by ours, and those poor within many miles of us—the Duke says he hopes by charitable actions and true penitence to make some atonement to heaven.

You will be surprised to see the effect this has upon his countenance and spirits, instead of that downcast, pensive, gloomy look, he has a placid cheerful one, his conscience now tells him he is doing right, the poor already proclaim his goodness and his own heart applauds his actions. Believe me ever

Your's,

ISABELLA OSMINGTON.

LETTER XXII.

Lady Isabella Osnington to Lady Yeatman.

DEAR LADY YEATMAN,

I AM sorry to find you cannot yet come amongst us, almost eight months are elapsed since I saw you, and I yet fear it will be some time before I shall have that happiness, but be assured my felicity is great, when you tell me you will comply with my request of residing with me entirely.

I have informed Lady Gertrude of your kind intentions, she remembers you at school, and longs to embrace the companion of her infant years, we all look forward to our social meeting with pleasure, with happiness, to welcome you to a society where goodness as well as greatness reigns—for we not only enjoy every comfort of life, but likewise add to those of others.—Our villagers are all cloathed, their houses repaired, and all our estates, as soon as the present leases are expired, will be let in small farms.

Harcourt studies the Duke's temper and is become a great favorite, I do not know which has the greatest share in his good graces, he is fond and happy with them all.

One day he said, my dear Isabella, I have often thought of Mr. Harcourt's goodness to you, and bounty to your supposed relations, I can see by every action he loves you, and indeed Lord Henry and Lady Maria has told me so, but that as he did not make you an offer before, though he certainly meant to do it had you not been snatched from him (he sighed when he spoke those words) he is now, since the acquisition of your fortune, fearful of a refusal, if not from you from me; but, my dear daughter, if you have the least partiality for him speak it, the year of mourning for my dear son is now expired, you may therefore declare your sentiments without infringing on the rules of decency; do not hide your inclination from me, for what will make you happy be assured will add to mine.

I confessed his goodness, his generosity had made an impression on my heart, and that as I had his approbation, if in some future time Mr. Harcourt addressed me, I should not hesitate receiving him as a lover.

I fancy his Grace and some of my good friends had been settling the plan, for the gentleman came the day after, and in the most respectful manner pleaded his long attachment, and his hopes of being heard, all which I graciously condescended to listen to, but will fix no time 'till you come to be with me notwithstanding

withstanding all his rhetoric.—My father and he has settled every thing already, he and you, my dear Lady Yeatman, are to live with us, you know you have promised, there's no receding now, 'tis fixed as fate—he has presented me with an immense fortune, Harcourt has behaved as generously.

We have agreed with the Belleville family to spend but three months of the year in London. I have settled an hundred per annum on my good old foster parents, which is as much as they would accept, indeed in the manner they have ever lived they could not tell what to do with more—given each of the pastry-cook's children five hundred pounds, and the parents two hundred a year for their lives. I had my dear mother's coffin taken up and placed by the side of my father's, in the family vault.—These, my dear Lady Yeatman, are the whole of our proceedings, and I sincerely hope to see you a witness of every future one. I have this moment received your's, wherein you tell me I shall have that pleasure next week, I need not say how welcome this intelligence is to me, as my dear Lady Yeatman long ere this is assured of the love and affection of her obliged friend,

ISABELLA OSMINGTON.

F I N I S.